THE TWO FRONTIERS

John Gould Fletcher

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A STUDY IN HISTORICAL PSYCHOLOGY

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER

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BOOK I

Only strong personalities can endure history; the weak are crushed beneath it.

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THE TWO FRONTIERS

Chapter I

THE study of history, which in the nineteenth century became no longer the province of a few specialists, but an almost universal pursuit carried on in hundreds of schools, and seemingly essential to the welfare of the State, is only of value if we are able to use historical criteria, the values of the past, as a means not only of judging but also of directing the latent powers of the present and the future. In most cases, however, to-day, history is studied merely for the purpose of recovering the past; and in order to bring the past into relation with the present day, something more than the pure historical sense is needed. For the process called history is in reality irreversible; we cannot go back to any specific age in the past and live in it even if we would, for the simple reason that we are the past plus—or minus—something. The only conception of human progress that is philosophically correct is not a conception of objective exter-

nal progress at all: actually it is probable that we exercise no more control over nature—and this despite our machines and labour-saving inventions—than our most remote and savage ancestors exercised with their magical rituals to ensure a supply of game, or the earth's fertility. If we have progressed at all, it is solely in subjective curiosity, range of knowledge, and interest in our own destiny. Through progress in research, depth of speculation, we have become something different from the peoples of the past. We have added to their experience other experiences of our own. We now face larger, more complex, and more world-embracing problems than any Greek of the age of Pericles ever envisaged. We must think more,—though whether our thinking will lead to such good results may well be doubted—than any of our forefathers thought during the whole course of their lives.

The superficial study of history on the other hand leads merely to the shallow modern view that history has already organised the world and done our thinking for us. We may develop this view optimistically or pessimistically, but the results are equally vicious. If we take the point of view that history has made us the heirs of the ages, and set us on the summit of human progress, we sink into

a Philistine acceptance of evils that will lead inevitably to disastrous self-complacency and to such catastrophes as the recent European War. It was in fact in Germany in the nineteenth century that this view of history developed, under Fichte and Hegel, and against its optimism Nietzsche wrote the best of his early essays. But one can find much of this same Philistine complacency with what history has already achieved, in such countries as America to-day, and it is partly with the aim of destroying it, that I have embarked on this study. On the other hand if we regard history more pessimistically as a series of magnificent efforts which somehow came to nothing, we fall into no less serious an error. The outcome of such a belief is to beg the entire question of our present-day existence. We become nostalgically romantic over some specific period in the past, say Ancient Greece or the thirteenth century, and ascribe all our inability fully to recapture the period in question to something which we call "modern capitalism," or the Renaissance, or democracy, or evangelical Christianity. In any case we transfer our own responsibility for the present day to the shoulders of some scapegoat—and thereby absolve ourselves. But no one is really ever absolved from taking part in history. The process of thinking of history in

terms of the past alone, tends to an act of wish-fulfilment; by it we merely make of history that which we have already wished history to be.

In order to correct this error in perspective, we must cease to regard history as a mere procession of events, and learn to look upon it from the standpoint of art and religion; these being not only humanity's highest and noblest, but also humanity's ultimate and most completely absolute values. From this standpoint the record of history is anything but a record of progress. Rather is it a series of fluctuations; periods of depression and stagnation alternating with periods of great hope and activity. That we have struck a period of stagnation to-day seems only too probable; the last thirty years of the nineteenth, and the first thirty years of the twentieth century have carried us far towards thorough-going religious and artistic chaos. But we cannot redeem that chaos by returning to an order and discipline of the mind which fitted the more limited intellectual and spiritual interests of yesterday, as so many of our academic critics would have us do. To revive humanism or scholasticism is useful, and to be commended as a valuable antidote to nineteenth century utilitarianism and naturalism; but all the scholasticism and humanism in the world cannot bring back the thirteenth century as it was, nor restore us to the fifteenth. We have

to pick our way through the twentieth century degeneration of values and chaos with but this consideration to console us: that it was precisely when the values of the ancient world, in Greece, Rome and Judea, were at their most degraded and chaotic that Christianity was born. Certainly we no longer look forward to a repetition of that particular event; but the event towards which the world is at present tending may be at least of equal significance to man as the dawn of Christianity. Let us for the moment keep an open mind on the matter.

Meanwhile, what we have to do is to read history with a fresh understanding of its symbolic import. To do this we need only concentrate attention on the values above-mentioned; the values of art and religion. We are best able in them to study the great cultures of the world in their symbolic relation to each other. We see in them how each culture has its own special symbol or set of symbols, that differentiates it from the whole. This science of comparative and symbolical history will inevitably lead us to the present day as the natural terminus of our investigation. Our object in studying history will become largely the task of sifting out the values of the past from the rubbish with which the present day has overlaid them. We will see that the past contains in essence the present, that the present merely repeats or transforms the

past, and that where it fails to do so, it fails through a lack of understanding of permanent human values. By studying the essence of the past, we do our utmost towards redeeming the failures of the present, and directing the forces of the future. We may even some day become masters of the future, if we set ourselves resolutely to learn the fate of those forces that have been found hostile, in past ages, to the movement of life.

2

About no word of the historian's vocabulary has there been so much argument and so little agreement as about the word "civilization." There are those who, with Spengler, would take it to denote the final stage of every great culture; a stage of which the chief features are over-crowding in great cosmopolitan cities, decline of agriculture, predominance of finance, prevailing economic crises, and the rule of dictatorships and mobs; a rapid decline of the fine-arts into sterile repetition of worn-out patterns and formulas; religion as a mere question of conventional state worship, not as a creative popular force; an increasing search for banal pleasures and barren distractions; a growing economic distress caused by pressure from below. Others, even more radical than Spengler, would

qualify civilization as a disease, and postulate a return to savagery as its only possible cure. But even savagery, as we know, is not without formal culture; and civilization, if we are to use the word at all, is a development of formal culture. Perhaps the best definition of civilization is that of Gobineau; "a state of relative stability, in which multitudes bind themselves to seek peacefully the satisfaction of their needs, and refine their intelligence and their morals." The crucial point of this definition is to be found in the word "stability." This stability is achieved by the general adoption of one system of religion, of one style of art and architecture, of one system of rule. Its nature is expressed alike in great public monuments, in details of domestic life, and in the preservation of written records and calendar-measurements. It is above all, a *state;* fluctuating according to economic conditions, invasions from without, expansions or contractions of effort, fresh racial intermixtures. And as such, its past manifestations display many of the leading characteristics of its recent manifestations which appear in every newspaper to-day.

There is no doubt for example that ancient Babylonia and Egypt are, in comparison with such culture as their neighbours possessed, to be ranked as civilizations of a high order. Both achieved the state of stability that Gobineau postulates. And

this state had as a basis in each case, a common geographical and racial element. Both were, above all, river cultures lying in close proximity to great desert wastes. Into the Nile valley, as into the flood region of the Euphrates and the Tigris, came an alien migration of Semitic culture. This Semitic element, strongly monotheistic in tendency, worked as an influence towards the final fusion of the local and tribal cults of the indigenous peoples into a common mythological and ethical structure which persisted for many centuries. But in each case the result was entirely different. In Ancient Egypt, the Semitic influence, which was exerted in successive waves of invasion from a period perhaps antedating history down to the Hyksos kings, found a very highly mixed congeries of races: in part dolmen-building pacific Berbers, in part lightly-skinned and more warlike Lybians, the whole more or less overlaying totemistic negro tribal confederations. The result was a civilization of monumental power and splendour, the remains of which had to wait for the dawn of the nineteenth century before being investigated, and whose renewed influence on the world at large now stands at a maximum. The leading characteristics of this civilization were, first, the universal belief in personal immortality, leading to a special cult of the tomb; second, the combined cult of the sun-disk

and of vegetation, expressed in the two great official religions of Amen-ra and Osiris; third, the division of the country into forty districts or nomes, corresponding probably to ancient tribal divisions, and the sway exerted over each of these divisions by some entirely local god, usually of animal form, representing the vestigial cult of some totemistic deity. The greatness of Egypt rested therefore on the fusion of two religious ideas of a high order that sprung from without; the cult of the suffering vegetation-god, with its belief in immortality, Aryan in essence and mystical in expression, symbolised in the trinity of Osiris, Isis and Horus; and the sun-cult, highly rationalistic and warlike, Semitic in essence, symbolised in the disk and boat of Amen-ra. Both of these rested upon, without disturbing, a foundation of primitive African totemism.

The development of the Babylonian belief sprang from an entirely different source. Here the Semitic invaders found an already rooted population probably of Mongolian stock, highly cultivated, and the comparison of the resultant Babylonian-Assyrian culture with the Egyptian is the comparison of that which is primarily Asiatic with that which is primarily European. There is a close parallel between the Babylonian ziggurat with its receding terraces and the great Asiatic

terraced shrines, of which the Altar of Heaven in Pekin is the latest example; there is even closer parallel between the belief in elemental spirits, devas, and demons of the Babylonians and the same thing in the Chinese, Thibetans, and Japanese. There the austere and not specifically creative imagination of the Semite worked again as a precipitant, fusing the original non-tribal, non-totemistic diversity of cult into a pantheon of fixed superior powers. The oldest gods, Ea, the fish-shaped god of the waters, Anu, the god of the sky, Enlil (Bel of Nippur), god of the Earth, were left undisturbed; but their cult became less important than that of the later group, each of whom became associated with a planet. Sin, the moon-god, Shamash, the sun-god, Marduk, the conquering war-god of Babylon itself, who became associated with the planet Jupiter, Nebo, the god of divination, associated with Mercury, and Ishtar, the goddess of fertility, associated with the morning and evening star of Venus, were the chief divinities of developed Babylonian-Assyrian worship. Each of these represents some super-natural magical force of the heavens, rather than of the earth. The Babylonian faith paid little attention to personal immortality, much to obedience to law and custom. Its chief religious documents are magic incantations, moral precepts, epic tales of the creation

and the destruction of the world. Shamanism, the cultivation of the magic powers whereby the priesthood strove to become one with the unseen and invisible world of spiritual influences, was universal in Babylon, and practically unknown in Egypt, where its place was taken by totemism. Thus one may say that the Babylonian faith was superrational, the Egyptian a sub-rational one.

These differences are no less climatic than racial. The plain of Mesopotamia, backed by the barren and terrible desert ranges of Persia and Armenia, lies at the mercy of the elements. Even the floods of the Euphrates and Tigris, that bring down the disintegrated loess from those mountains, and make thereby the rich soil of Mesopotamia, are uncontrollable torrents, which successive races have vainly tried to stem by constructing great irrigation and canal systems to obviate disaster. The climate itself is one of sudden sharp changes: torrential rains followed by intense heat, icy winds succeeding torrid blasts from the Persian Gulf. Under such conditions, the type of worship developed would be naturally that of the elements, regarded as superior powers: the "host of heaven" of the ancient Chaldees whose imagination so powerfully influenced the Old Testament. On the other hand, in Egypt the climate is uniform, the only outward change being the three months of

flood followed by nine months of dry weather. Rain is practically unknown, and the surrounding deserts are for the most part adequate defence against invasion. The only danger is in reality internal; the danger of physical slackness and enervation brought about by interbreeding in a hot subtropical climate. The importation of fresh blood from without thus becomes from time to time a necessity to the Egyptian, as it is a danger of the first order to the Babylonian. During the course of ancient history from the first dynasty to the twenty-second, the Egyptians present the spectacle (except for the period of Amenophis IV) of a political and religious uniformity; in Babylonia the religious basis alone was uniform; politically the country was subject to violent and disruptive changes.

3

To an intelligent European coming to maturity on the threshold of the sixteenth century, the world must have seemed in a state of crisis and unrest comparable only to that which it had already gone through when the power of ancient Rome in the fifth century broke before the combined assaults of the barbarians. We, looking back on that age from the standpoint of our equally perplexing modern problems, regard that time as the culmina-

tion of the Renaissance; but to those who lived in it (if we except a few classical humanists and scholars) it must have appeared as if the end of the world, expected for many centuries, was at last at hand. The Middle Ages had passed away, with none of their hopes realised, or aims achieved. Not only had Christianity failed in wresting the Holy Sepulchre from the hands of the infidel, but the infidel himself, in the person of the Turk, had succeeded in overthrowing the last shadowy power of the Eastern Roman Empire, had made himself master of Constantinople, and was now threatening Europe. The trade route with the East that had upheld the glory of Genoa and Venice was cut off by Turkish galleys; the boundaries of Europe stopped at the littoral of the Mediterranean and the Adriatic. The old dream of the Middle Ages, which Dante had been the last to express, of a unified Holy Roman Empire, sanctified by the blessing of the Vicar of Christ, to take the place of the warring nationalities which the ancient Pagan Empire had left behind as wrecks in its wake, had now at last completely disappeared. France had become a powerful nationality, so powerful as to be able to invade Italy and dictate terms to the Church. The German Empire, always at war with its great feudal electors, was practically bankrupt. England, practical, hard-headed and inclined to

heresy, had but recently settled a long feud between the rival houses of York and Lancaster, and was rapidly reviving in power under the sway of the shrewd Tudors. The only power that was not either indifferent or hostile to the claims of the mediæval faith was that of Spain, and that lay behind the barrier of the Pyrenees, and was further isolated by having to struggle with its own domestic Moorish problem.

Moreover, along with the dream of the Holy Roman Empire, the opposite dream of making the Pope himself the universal ruler of Europe, had utterly vanished. The ambitious nobles of Italy were engaged in buying and selling the most exalted of all Christian offices, with the avowed aim of making themselves masters over the peninsula. At the present moment, the Borgia family, by means of wholesale bribery, violence, and outrage had seized upon the sacred office. One unyielding Dominican, Savonarola, had condemned them to the utmost from the very centre of Florence, but he had been silenced. Everywhere the attitude of mind that had been fundamental to the Middle Ages, that this world was but an anteroom and preparation for something far more important, eternal bliss or eternal damnation, was fading away. God had given the world to men; it was for them to enjoy it.

Meantime, an enormous rift was about to appear on the face of European Christianity itself. The whole structure of the Christian faith whose foundations, soaked in the blood of martyrs, lay underneath the debris of the Roman Empire itself, and whose mighty walls had been guided upward by the great monastic effort of the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries; this whole structure which had burst forth into springing magnificence of vaults and pinnacles under the great popular Gothic awakening of the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries, now displayed a tiny rift at the summit. Within fifty years from the coming of the sixteenth century, everything lay in ruin. In the north the altars were stripped, the monasteries despoiled or destroyed, the vernacular psalms and the Bible took the place of the liturgy. In the south, the basilica of St. Peter, the most sacred shrine of mediæval Christianity itself, fell, to be replaced by a pompous shrine dedicated to the temporal splendour of that papacy that could no longer command obedience over half of Europe. The sombre prophecies of the Apocalypse seemed about to be fulfilled. The "abomination of desolation" stood in the holy place; or rather, there was no more a holy place that was not already become an abomination of desolation. Thanks to the invention of printing, the wary ambition of pushful

princes, and the steady uprise of the merchant-classes to positions of rank and power, Mammon was gaining more adherents every day in his long battle with God. Savonarola had already called in question the authority of the Pope, an example which innumerable Protestants were soon to follow.

Into this tortured, desperate, final scene of the mediæval world, in which the power that had directed the Middle Ages, the power of mystic, legendary Christianity was seeking fanatically for destruction in the embrace of death, while a newer more terrible Mars and Venus uprose from the past to dispute about the new-born Renaissance, there suddenly came the rumour of two tiny and inconspicuous events somewhere in the unknown territory that lay beyond the boundaries of men's maps and minds. Three ships guided by an obscure Genoese pilot and a shrewd Spanish navigator, had gone out into the Atlantic to look for an island called Antillia which was rumored to exist somewhere westward of the Canaries; two of them had returned, having apparently not discovered this island, but with the knowledge of having sailed far beyond, stumbling apparently upon the further Indies, which no one had seen or heard of since Marco Polo had been there far back in the thirteenth century. And twenty years earlier, in 1472,

an embassy from Ivan III, the quasi-independent ruler of a territory called Muscovy which lay somewhere beyond the forests and swamps of Poland, and about which nobody knew anything except that it was presumably of the Greek Orthodox faith, but had paid tribute to Tartar infidels for untold centuries, suddenly turned up in Rome and demanded the hand of Zoë, niece of the last Christian ruler of Constantinople, from the Pope, who had taken her under his protection. At this time the council of Florence was sitting, debating whether the Eastern and the Western Churches could not be re-united in view of the fact that the Turk had taken Constantinople and was threatening Europe itself. It was naïvely supposed that to marry Zoë to this Eastern schismatic would further this object. So Zoë was sent on her long journey to Moscow, with a Latin prelate, Cardinal Antonio, for a guide, to discuss the question of the re-union of the Churches. In the upshot, Zoë married Ivan, but there was no re-union, and Cardinal Antonio returned to Italy in discomfiture. From these two insignificant events—both, be it noted, engineered and pushed forward by Italians—we chart the entire course of what is known as modern world-history.

4

The difference between ancient, mediæval, and modern history is only a difference of degree, not of kind. Human beings, and what is still more, human experiences, have been essentially the same in all ages; and it is not the least of our romantic errors of adolescence to think of the Greeks or the Elizabethans as beings belonging to an entirely different species from the men we every day see about us. The differences between one type of man and another are everywhere differences in spiritual perception; and this has been always a question of a few exceptionally favoured individuals as against a commonplace and indistinguishable mob. It must be admitted, however, that Christianity did much to heighten the spiritual perception even of the multitude; historically Christianity enlarged the bonds of the spiritual by taking in more of the actual. Before Christianity, the gods were terrible powers to be placated, and human life had no relation to their life. The gift Christianity gave to the world was a dim and vague, but vast, notion that the roots of the physical and the spiritual lay closely together, insofar as God had already become Man for man's sake. This perception, that perfection lay in and through Christ, culminated

in the great spiritual climax of the Christian drama, the thirteenth century. After that period there was rapid and sure decline. There was not again to be the birth of another saviour through a Virgin, nor did the figure that the cathedrals had dimly foreseen as standing before their altars, the figure of the king-bishop, tiaraed with the three crowns of earth, purgatory, and heaven, and belted with the sword of justice, take shape in actual flesh. Instead of the bells and incense that were to usher in the Holy Grail procession, there arose the charnel-vault order of corruption, and the clank of bones beneath the armour of the knight; instead of the bridal song of the Lamb and the Church, Gothic arches resounded with the mocking psalmody of the *Dies Irae* and the Dance of Death. Slowly but with irresistible power, men turned away from the Uprisen Judge that they had fancied would again come to judge the World; and in Italy, parent of civilizations, the Popes themselves began with the aid of Mars and Venus to dream of refounding Rome. In the jewelled crucifix that hung about the neck of Alexander VI was set an antique cameo, representing a nude Venus. Thus the old gods returned, not to be worshipped as material, but as spiritual powers. A few men here and there babbled strange news of new-found Indies, and

remote Muscovy. These were perhaps the terrestrial paradise; the new heaven and earth proclaimed by the Evangelist.

If we turn from the scene of the sixteenth century to the middle of the eighteenth, we find that the entire structure of Christian Europe is changed. The rift that was to shatter the whole work of the Middle Ages has developed, leaving Europe half Catholic, half Protestant. In each case, a full century of fanaticism has burned through, leaving rationalistic aches, tolerant scepticisms, polite lip-service to formula, or naked barbarism and desperation. The power of Ancient Rome has not been reborn in the person of the Pope; he may be pontifex, but not beyond the states of the Church itself. The true ruler of European mankind is now a periwigged, middle-aged Pallas, who has set aside her shield and helmet and is busy attempting chemical experiments, doing the grand tour, building baroque churches, and writing fugues and chamber-music. Meanwhile beyond the borders of Europe are barbarians with other gods: to the East the incalculable force of great Muscovy, sated with the blood of Sweden and Poland; to the West, the equally incalculable wilderness of the American Continent swallowing up hosts of migrating English, French and Spaniards. In them men will inevitably find again the spiritual symbols trans-

formed and enlarged, whose ancient manifestations still sleep underground in the valley of the Nile and the Tigris. In them will re-awaken to rule over the earth the spiritual flame of Egypt and Assyria.

Thus at the outset of our enterprise, to attach to our side all those who are willing to use their imaginations in the study of man, and to frighten away those who have no imagination and no need to use it for anything, we inevitably set a myth to take the place of human history. And indeed, could we in any case do better? What are the Greeks to us to-day but the myths of Prometheus, of the warfare between the Olympians and the Titans, of the Argonauts, and the fatal struggle around Troy? All the meaning of Hellas—perhaps the whole course of Hellenic history—is contained in these stories. What are the Romans but the story of the Sabine Women, of the geese of the Capitol, of the death of Regulus, of Horatius at the bridge? What is India but the great chaotic conflict between gods and men set out in the Ramayana? History is not alone the parroting of meaningless dates and facts, a mere branch of ethnology or economics, or the study of picturesque and powerful personalities. When all these are assimilated and done with, history emerges as a series of symbols each infused with profound spiritual meaning.

It is through myth alone that man finds guidance in his weary march through the vale of despair and the heights of glory. Some day someone will write the great myth of our modern world: the story of man striving to tame the machine he has invented: some day there may even be recorded the myth of the entire planet we inhabit. Let it, like the myth we are about to spin, find rest at last in the archives of some superhuman and undying memory.

Chapter II

THE influence of geographical situation and of climate on human culture is a subject so vast and profound that only the combined industry and genius of a Humboldt or an Elie Reclus could possibly ever exhaust it. And even a perception of the fact that man everywhere responds to his environment, reflects his environment, adapts himself to and, in the end, identifies himself completely with his environment, does not account for all the profound racial differences between man and man. Setting these differences apart, we may nevertheless say that all human cultures derive from five recognizable types: river culture, largely pacific and agricultural; desert culture, largely nomadic and war-like; mountain culture, largely fluctuating between mysticism and realism, alternately conservative and adventurous; tropical-swamp culture, largely theocratic, conservative and defensive; and marine culture, largely democratic, inventive and adaptable. The best example of the first class is ancient China; of the second, the Persians or the Arabs; of the third, the Greeks, Etruscans and

early Romans; of the fourth, the Hindus, Cambodians, Aztecs and Mayas; of the fifth the Cretans, Phœnicians and English.

A glance at the map will show that the nature of the North American continent, as of Russia, was such as to insure that any culture either country achieved was destined to be largely of the river type. The central portion of the United States is occupied by the immense river system of the Mississippi and its tributaries. This system flows through immense plains, and its lower reaches are consequently subject to frequent and damaging floods, forming an immense delta of two hundred and fifty miles of intensely fertile black soil. To eastward the region of the Appalachians and of the Blue Ridge is heavily forested and of much poorer soil, but beyond these again, in the Atlantic seaboard, is a series of rivers, running generally southward and eastward, with good harbours at their mouths, and generally highly fertile in their lower reaches, though less subject to floods. The interior of the country, it is true, was not settled until after the winning of independence at the close of the eighteenth century; but the whole political development of the Colonies was an advance towards the type of government that was most suitable to the environment later found and assimilated in the Ohio, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Missouri regions:

a preponderantly agricultural community, intensely suspicious of outside interference, deeply rooted in family sentiment and respect for the soil, narrowly conservative in outlook and largely ruled by primitive moral precept. Westward of the Mississippi stretches the open prairie region tending to break down this life into the more undeveloped forms of pure nomadism.

The purest example of such a culture is, as has already been pointed out, the civilization of China. If we examine the moral and religious basis of ancient Chinese life, we find that everything is made to centre about the perpetuation of family life, and the maintenance of the fertility of the soil. All outward forms, from the ritual spring ploughing that the Emperor himself performed annually at the Temple of Agriculture in Pekin, to the precepts of Confucius, derive from the one prevailing desire to ensure an unchanging round of harvests with the least disturbance of outward conditions. Such a people is not predominantly warlike, and is better for defence than for conquest. They are better qualified to display the firm qualities, great endurance, immense solidarity, and a uniformity of style, than the feats of daring and mental adaptability displayed by mountain and marine peoples. In contrast with desert or tropical-swamp peoples, their mythology is undeveloped, their religious ar-

dour halts at the frontiers of an ethical positivism.

In contrast with the map of North America, the map of Russia shows even more clearly the characteristics of a featureless forest, an unmarked plain. Yet a glance at this map will show that here too, the development of culture has depended on the existence of great river systems. The Volga with its tributaries, the Oka, the Dnieper, the Western Dvina all have their headwaters within a few miles of each other, and all radiate from a common centre, where the black soil belt of central Russia, intensely favourable to agriculture, meets the forest belt of the north. The position of these rivers, and the direction in which they flowed, fixed inevitably the centre of the Ancient Russian commonwealth. The Volga and the Oka communicate with the Caspian; the Dnieper and its eastward neighbour, the Don, with the Black Sea; the Dvina, and its tributaries, the Lovat and the Volckov, flow into the Baltic. In the early Middle Ages this became naturally the great trade route between Persia and the Eastern Roman Empire, and the Hansa settlements, as well as the Scandinavian peoples. Its Scandinavian Viking origin is shown by the Varangian establishment of Kiev as the capital, back in the ninth century, with Novgorod and Smolensk as outlying centres; unfortunately the political unity that the converted Viking invaders were able

to impose upon the timid, conservative, and heathen Slavonic masses, was dependent upon their ability to wage incessant war upon swarms of barbarians from farther east. From the Pechenegs in 862, down to the Polovtsy in 1238, the ancient Russian culture lay at the mercy of perpetual Tartar invasion from the desert plains of Central Asia: Kiev finally fell in 1238, and the insignificant independent principality of Moscow more northward only survived by its comparative difficulty of access and by the payment of a great tribute to the Tartar Khans. The first ruler of Muscovy who began to win out in the long struggle with the Tartars, a struggle which left the Russian people profoundly modified ethnologically in the direction of a Mongolian type, was precisely Ivan III, whom we have already seen sending to Rome to obtain the hand of the niece of the last Eastern Emperor; with his reign we begin Modern Russia which profoundly differs from, though it is the resultant of the physical and racial forces that shaped mediæval Russia. Here too we have a settled agricultural people, clinging to great river systems, apprehensive of foreign invasion, intensely conservative, strongly patriarchal, and primitively religious. The chief difference between these people and the first Anglo-Saxon settlers of America was psychological. In the case of the American colonies, social and polit-

ical unity depended on each individual's attitude to his neighbour; in the case of Russia, threatened on all sides with invasion, it depended on the purely military and arbitrary power exercised by a personal sovereign, the prince of Moscow.

2

The English-speaking colonies of America are generally supposed to have asserted their complete independence in 1776 and to have won it in 1783, when the fact is that they were completely independent almost from the beginning. In theory and in theory only, they were begun as an extension of royal property to the new-found continent. The Tudor sovereigns were as highly imbued with the idea of the divine right of kings as any other European sovereign of the time; their ideas on this subject were not different from the ideas of their enemy, Philip II of Spain. It will be remembered that the Spanish had pushed forward their conquests and settlements on the principle that the money raised to undertake them should be provided by the adventurers themselves; except in the case of Columbus, the crown itself was not financially interested in the exploits of the conquistadores of Mexico or Peru. But once the country was won, one-fifth of the revenue had to go to the crown.

The Tudor plan was not very different. King James merely granted permission to explore and settle to the Virginia Company, which itself raised the funds; how much of the profits of the enterprise would return to him was left open. The profit was expected to accrue from the discovery of gold mines, or the exploration of a new trade route to the East Indies.

The experience of the Virginia Company is particularly interesting in this connection. After five years of struggle and the expenditure of a great deal of money, it was found that the country contained nothing of value as regards mines, and could only be a source of revenue if developed agriculturally. Thereupon in 1612, King James gave way and permitted each settler henceforward to take out an assignment of land. The result was that the Virginia Company henceforward would at last be able to assimilate profits, not on the basis of prospective mineral discovery, but on the basis of exchange of commodities between the old world and the new. But in order to keep the colony prosperous, it was necessary to put its government in the hands of those who best understood and were able to cope with the novel conditions. Therefore some measure of self-government was permitted. Apart from the royal governor and six councillors appointed by the Company, a popular assembly

was called together composed of two representatives elected by each town, hundred, or plantation. Laws passed by this assembly could be vetoed in England; but such a veto on the part of the King would lead to the passive but unalterable resistance which is well known to all students of early agricultural communities. For a few years after 1612, King James did not dare to interfere, and the Virginia Company prospered by raising tobacco. Then, thanks to the whispers of sedition within the colony that were carried to his ears, as well as the protests of the Spanish Ambassador, who became more and more annoyed at the English establishing themselves in nominally Spanish territory, James decided to interfere. In 1624 he dissolved the Virginia Company, and the colony again became crown property. But he died the next year, without interfering with the popular assembly, which continued under his successor. Had this popular assembly not existed, Virginia would have probably become de-populated. The same type of popular assembly was formed by the other colonies, after the example of Virginia, and the history of the thirteen colonies up to the time of the Revolution is a story of the struggles between the colonists themselves and their royal governors; a struggle which culminated only with complete independence.

The American colonies were not able to live and

grow at all without this local self-government on the democratic model, to build roads, put up meeting-houses, make schools, fight the Indians, and impose tariffs and taxes on their own products. It will be remembered that in 1623, just before attempting to crush the Virginia Company altogether, King James had been persuaded, after a long struggle with popular opinion, to grant a monopoly on all tobacco brought to England to the Virginia settlers. This monopoly, long agitated for, and supported by the whole force of the powerful popular faction in the Virginia Company itself, which had already sunk some two hundred thousand pounds in the development of the new country, led to extravagant hopes on the part of the London merchants who had supported the Virginia enterprise from the beginning, of obtaining a great return from their investment. The corresponding downfall of the company, and the reassertion of royal authority, worked as a rapid cause of disillusionment with the power of the crown, and largely contributed to the popular revolution against the Stuarts which broke out in 1640.

The New England colonies, even more than Virginia, began as settlements which had obtained nothing but a tacit permission to leave the country from the English crown. Massachusetts, the first of them, owed its being to the activities of certain

English separatists, who finding no religious liberty in England itself, first went to Holland, and after six years, finally decided to cross the ocean to a spot where they would be entirely free from outside interference. To these Plymouth settlers, there were added in 1630 a great body of Puritans who nominally were members of the Church of England but in reality in complete revolt against Archbishop Laud, whose avowed aim was the destruction of the Low-Church party. The refusal of these numerically preponderant settlers to admit anyone to citizenship except members of their own particular communion led to the settlement, by the dissenting elements, of Rhode Island, and to the establishment of Connecticut, neither of which had any support from the English Crown and both of which were rooted in popular government. Meantime between these and the colonies of Virginia and Maryland (which again had been formed by religious refugees on a basis of tolerance) to the south, stood New Amsterdam, which the Dutch had organised on the old feudal system of making each great landholder responsible for the life and death of his tenants. The Dutch experiment was a painful failure and became assimilated into the other English settlements after 1664.

Thus, the development of the American seaboard colonies under English auspices led to the creation

of a number of practically independent republics, differing widely in their views as to the relation between politics and religion, owning a nominal sovereignty to the English Crown, but in reality highly suspicious and intolerant of outside interference, determined to support themselves with as little help from others as possible and altogether transforming themselves from being mere frontier trading posts to self-supporting but rival commonwealths. They were separated from each other by the fact that they had been originally planted near the mouths of navigable bays and rivers: the Chesapeake, the Delaware, the Hudson, the Charles. The intervening territory was still the no-man's land of the Indian. The fact that the Indian had to be pushed off the land before it could be settled, and the fact that the Indian always resisted, gave the American colonies their only solidarity. This is shown by the New England Confederation of 1643 which came into being as a result of the Pequot War, and the general fear of a league of Indians to drive out the whites. It comprised the settlements of Massachusetts, Plymouth, Connecticut, and New Haven.

The conditions in the interior were such as to make it certain that only the English idea of gradually pushing the Indians westward by means of a fringe of settlements could in any way prevail. The Spaniards in the south and southwest had de-

liberately come into the country only in order to exploit it; their interest was solely in finding El Dorado, and only a few devoted missionaries among them took any interest in the conditions of the Indian tribes, or tried to promote agricultural settlement. The fact that the Spanish cared nothing for anything but ostentation and conquest gave a superficial veneer of European civilization to their chief centres of settlement, but left the wilderness practically untouched between them. In fact, the Spanish attitude of complete exploitation helped in the long run the Indian cause, because the Spanish conquerors did not scruple to mingle their blood with that of the Indian captives with the result that a mixed race soon uprose, largely Indian in outlook, and ferociously independent, which was destined later to give endless trouble to the Spaniards themselves as to the people of the United States. And as the white race pushed westward, and the evidences of mineral wealth increased, while the prospective returns from agriculture correspondingly diminished, something of the Spanish attitude was naturally assimilated by the Anglo-Saxon pioneer stock, with the result that the Spanish philosophy of reckless daring and lazy indifference became the basis of the cowboy and "bad man" type of the far West. The French had scarcely done better; except for a few settlements of fisher-

folk in Canada, they had contented themselves with building a chain of trading posts about the Great Lakes and the chief tributaries of the Mississippi, and had become a breed of trappers and fur-traders. They too had no race prejudice against intermingling their blood with the Indians. Thus, the idea of the English invaders to conquer by means of complete settlement and assimilation of the land to the forms of English culture was inevitably the only path by which the land could become permanently what is known in America as "a white man's country"; but even in their case, as it happened, something of the Indian outlook and social system inevitably entered and modified the English colonial forms of life. This was due to religious as well as economic differences. The middle-class, mercantile, dissenting fanaticism of New England instinctively despised the planter aristocracy, strongly episcopalian and conservative, of Virginia and the Carolinas; the planter aristocracy equally hated the pioneer squatter type that developed in the valleys beyond the Blue Ridge; and this division of sentiment between the various sections of the community was destined to run like a discordant thread throughout the warp and woof of all later American life. It corresponded roughly to the long-standing tribal antagonisms of the dispossessed Indian tribes. Nor was this all. The in-

vestigations of American anthropologists have conclusively shown that the children of European immigrants, born in America, tend to take Indian characteristics, a taller stature and a more powerful physical development than their parents. Most notably is this the case in the change of head form. The Indian head with its high cheek-bones, heavy jaw, sloping forehead, and great development of the back and base of the skull, recurs, according to Professor Franz Boas, even in the children of immigrants who have only lived for a few months in America. So great is the influence of climate, and perhaps also of diet, upon the naturally conservative, slow-changing Anglo-Saxon. Moreover in the settling of America, the Celtic side of the English genius strongly manifested itself; and a considerable portion of the population, in the Southern colonies at least, were Celtic in type and in sympathy. The Germanic tradition of the town-meeting and the local assembly was curiously crossed with the Scots-Irish tradition of the family feud and the local uprising.

We have now to compare this growth of the American settlements with the growth of the Egyptian social system, as set out in our first chapter. In the loose confederation of the geographically separate colonies, we have a parallel to the division of the Egyptian territory into separate nomes,

under the sway of different tribes. In the rivalry between Upper and Lower Egypt, we have a rivalry akin to the rivalry between the Northern and the Southern colonies. In the shrewd practical pragmatic realism of the American frontiersmen, we have something that recalls the lack of space-feeling, the pastoral and agricultural conventions that inform Egyptian art. Even in the respect that the American colonies were to show for the royal charter, the legal document, the written word, we have much that recalls to mind the superstitious respect with which all the Egyptians regarded their hieroglyphic writing. Only a Pharaoh is needed to complete the picture, but the American colonies could not produce a Pharaoh, nor a priestly cult to support him; because instead of the single valley of the Nile, they were pushing up twenty great rivers; instead of a single dominant religion, they had a dozen different ones to choose from.

3

As we have already seen, Ivan III, who became the independent ruler of Moscow in 1462, and in 1472 married Zoë (who later took the name of Sophia), the niece of the last Christian ruler of Constantinople, was the first sovereign of Russia whose power became so important as to make some

impression on the course of Western European History. He was the first to take the title of Sovereign of All Russia, and Czar, and his reign lasting down to 1505 is the record of his struggle to make that title good. In order to do so, he first had to deal with the Golden Horde of the heathen Tartars, encamped for three centuries on the lower Volga; but this power, which had continually kept Russia in subjection, was now breaking up of itself, thanks to internal dissensions about succession with the Tartars of the Crimea. Ivan's chief enemies lay in fact to the westward, in the great military and feudal powers of Poland and Lithuania.

These two powers had acted largely together ever since 1386. In each case the country was ruled by an independent sovereign, supported by great feudal nobles. These nobles, whether as bishops, barons whose castles commanded the trade-routes, land-owners commanding the loyalty of hundreds of serfs, were one and all jealous of any independent action on the part of the king. And inasmuch as the sovereign in each country depended entirely on their support in the case of war, and the Tartar menace no less affected the security of Lithuania and of Poland than that of Russia, the stability of both countries depended on the continued loyalty and bravery, and the lack of inner causes of friction, among the gentry themselves. This gentry, the *szlachta,* was world-famous for its

pride and fighting spirit. During the centuries that followed the downfall of the old principality of Kiev in 1226, the Lithuanian knights, backed by Poland, had absorbed the richest and most fertile portion of Russia, the plain of the Dnieper, including Smolensk and Kiev itself. To the north lay two independent mercantile commonwealths, important centres of trade between the Urals to eastward, and the Hansa towns of the Baltic to westward: Novgorod and Pskov. These were ruled by their own town councils of nobles, or boyars; they were more disposed to be friendly to Poland or Lithuania than to Moscow. Against them no less than these two usurping powers, Ivan III and his successor Basil III who died in 1533, had to make war, in order to recover that which he regarded as his lost patrimony: Russia itself.

The process that these princes inaugurated was completed by the accession to the throne of Ivan III's grandson in 1533, the most extraordinary and tragic of all Russian rulers, known to later history as Ivan the Terrible. During his long reign of forty-nine years the whole system of complete autocratic government, resting ultimately on the will of the Czar alone, that ruled Russia outwardly and inwardly down to the advent of the Bolsheviks to power in 1917, came into existence. When he came to the throne, his predecessors had already won back the Dnieper territory as far as Smolensk from

Lithuania, but this was not enough. If the principality of Moscow, which now stretched from the Black Sea to the shores of the Gulf of Finland, and to the Urals, was to develop into a power capable of imposing its will on Europe, it must have access to the Baltic. The mineral wealth of the Urals, the sturgeon from the lower Volga, the furs and hides of the forest belt, were in as great demand now by Sweden and the Hansa Confederacy as the ancient products of Constantinople and the Levant that had penetrated through the same territory in the Middle Ages had been. Unfortunately the outlet to the Baltic lay through Livonia which was Polish territory; and Poland and the Hansa knights, their allies, were not disposed to let the Moscow Czars have sole control over this trade route. Under Ivan IV, the attention of Muscovy turned from Lithuania to Poland, and later to Sweden, which held Esthonia, the other outlet to the Baltic, and a struggle ensued which went on till 1582, ending in a complete check to the ambitions of the Moscow rulers. The outlet to the Baltic Sea and accordingly to a position where Russia could treat with the powers of Europe, as an independent equal, was not to be granted for a full century. Meantime, during this same reign, the Crimean Tartars who had succeeded the Golden Horde, and who had been friendly enough to support Ivan IV's predecessor in his Lithuanian wars,

became again hostile and turned to close alliance with the dreaded Turks who had effectively closed the Black Sea outlet. As late as 1574, Moscow itself was raided and burned by a force of 120,000, who took away over a hundred thousand captives. Although the Muscovy Czars now controlled the whole resources of the country from the frontier of Siberia to the Polish plain, they were powerless until by establishing sea-contact with Europe, they could obtain in exchange for their fish, furs and minerals, weapons, munitions, and an army on the European model to combat their enemies to the south and east.

This necessity for finding an outlet to the sea controlled all of Russia's later historical policy, as the necessity of warding off interference from overseas controlled the whole policy of the dawning American colonies. The necessity in each case was dictated by geographical situation, no less than by sociological conditions. A glance at the map will show that Russia is, strictly speaking, a country without a coastline, whose three outlets to the Ocean, through the Baltic, the Black Sea, and the White Sea, lie always at the mercy either of hostile powers or of the elements. On the other hand, America lies completely open on the Atlantic seaboard. There is entry through a score of open rivers and bays, and the ocean-path being the way by which settlement was made and maintained, it is

easy to see how much the colonists (who were in continual conflict with the English crown over their scarcely won and jealously guarded liberties) longed to be able to close the way of access behind them; or only keep it open for those who would agree with their semi-agricultural, semi-nomad spirit of independence. But if we turn from this picture to the map of Russia, it is equally easy to see how, if the whole power of Muscovy was not to fall apart, and the country to revert to being in part a conquest of hostile Poland, in part a mere nomad dependency of Tartary, it was necessary to keep a sea-route open for the marketing of Muscovy's products, and also necessary to enlist all the European aid possible in improving the general backwardness of the country. So as early as 1547 we find Ivan the Terrible sending the Saxon Schlitte as emissary to Europe to obtain artisans and scholars; many of the churches of Moscow itself were the work of Italian architects; and the history of Ivan's later negotiations with England for a commercial treaty (which as he said "weighed heavier on him than tribute") and even for a bride, in the person of one of Elizabeth's maids of honour, is well known. In order to maintain an insecure position between the two dangers of the Tartar Caspian and the Teutonic Baltic, the autocratic ruler of Muscovy had to call in the aid of Western Europe—and with it, the subversive radicalism that

Western Europe was to later develop. In order to maintain their own insecure position between the danger of an Indian Confederation to westward, and the danger of Crown interference from overseas, the independently spirited colonists had to sink their own radical differences of outlook and religion and become artificially centralised about the most powerful classes in the community which were the merchants and land-owners. Thus the two countries, so much akin in climate and physical features, and even in the highly mixed nomad population that inhabited them—not to mention the perhaps common Mongolian parentage of the underlying Tartar and Indian—early took the path of polar opposition in temperament. The one became more and more autocratic and despotic as the other became more and more democratic and egalitarian. In the one, the outlying districts were always swayed by a centralised power; but as this power depended on military conquest, loot and tribute for its maintenance, it was in continual danger of collapse. In the other, the separate colonies formed a loose confederation that would be likely to collapse of itself from without if it could not find a centre.

Here in this opposition of social organisation we find what in Russia chiefly recalls Ancient Babylonia. Older than Egypt—for recent archæological researches into the Sumerian civilisation have

left no doubt on that point—Babylonia was at first ruled by independent city-dynasties, as was Russia during the Varangian period. It only achieved unity under the dominance of a single city, which geographically stood at its centre, and whose local god-cult was made, probably under military pressure, the official state religion. Here we have a parallel to the position of Moscow and to the development of the official Russian church under Ivan the Terrible. This unity could only be maintained so long as the central sovereign was a man of powerful and strong personality: a Hammurabi or a Sargon. This condition also obtained in Russia, as anyone can see by consulting the next chapter of this book. The only thing in short lacking to this parallel is that Babylonia-Assyria achieved its own symbolic mythology, a symbolic mythology of great importance to the development of the Hebrews, and consequently of Christianity; while early Muscovy, and the later Russian Empire, only borrowed the essential basis of theirs from the already formulated system of Eastern Christianity. But this failure of the central intelligence of the Slav to distinguish independently the immediate needs of his own temporal destiny from the limitless drift of eternity, is characteristic; its psychological implications run like a red thread throughout the entire course of later Russian history.

Chapter III

THE English-speaking American colonies developed in comparative peace and tranquillity, except for Indian wars on the frontier, internal religious quarrels, and difficulties with their own harvests down to the close of the Puritan Revolution in England and the accession of Charles II in 1660. During the whole reign of Charles I, and later under Cromwell, the internal difficulties of the English State were so great, that no further attempts were made to interfere with the gradual growth of the colonies, or to check the spread of self-government. During the same period, Russia passed through its first and most terrible internal crisis; a crisis always to be known later as "the time of troubles," and which was destined to fix immutably the political foundations of the country as an independent state.

The aim of Ivan the Terrible was, as we have seen, to throw off the grip that Poland and Sweden held on the Baltic; and to destroy the power of Lithuania, which still, in alliance with a band of freebooters, the Zaporogian Cossacks, held fast to

the outlets of the Dnieper in the Black Sea. There was also danger from the Tartars of the Crimea, which must be reckoned with. Russia was therefore committed to war on three of four sides; only on the side of Siberia could Moscow's sway be carried peacefully beyond the Urals. Ivan, as we have seen, was checked in his ambitions to free the shores of the Baltic, though he won notable victories in the Crimea, opening up the Caspian, and overrunning a great deal of Siberia. But his chief troubles were internal, and sprang from the feudal organization which had hitherto supported the Princes of Muscovy on their thrones.

The chief powers, next to the Czar himself, were the great landowning nobles, the boyars. It was this class alone that could vote taxes, support campaigns with their serfs, send their sons to take part in the state service. It was this class that now began to behave as the corresponding class had done centuries before them in Western Europe. They more and more attempted to put a check upon the power that was falling into Ivan's hands. The Czar of Muscovy had, unfortunately, no middle class or merchant class to fall back upon, and so was forced either to trust the boyars or no one. The example of Poland was always before Ivan's eyes. That warlike and once powerful kingdom was continually sinking into anarchy and impo-

tence, thanks to the greed and independence of its gentry. After every reign there had followed an interregnum, and the kingship was so shorn of power that it practically had none left except that of punishing criminals, and making war. Several of Ivan's leading nobles, suspicious of his growing autocracy, were now tempted into leaning towards Poland; and many of the former independent cities, notably Novgorod, were going in the same way. The fruits of freedom were becoming tempting to the Russians now that they had lost them. In this situation Ivan struck, and struck hard with such effect that his reign was ever after remembered as a time of terror. He established a secret police, chosen and paid by him personally, who were sworn to support the Czar at the cost of their lives, and by this means, systematically destroyed all the boyars who showed signs of independence. Tortures, murders, spyings, assassinations were the order of the day. Even the Metropolitan of the Orthodox Church, venerated in Russia as no man, protested against the régime of terror that Ivan set up, but paid for his protest with his life.

Unfortunately, Ivan's system proved workable only so long as there was a strong and ruthlessly determined man at the head of affairs to control it. As he left no successor, the leading boyars at his death decided to offer the control of affairs to one

of their number, Boris Godunov. Boris was undoubtedly as suspicious of their power as Ivan had been, but utterly unable to do without it, and so the country rapidly fell into a condition of internal revolt directed and engineered from Poland. During the period of utter anarchy that followed, Poland might have acquired complete control over Russian affairs, had it not been for internal jealousies among the boyars themselves, and for the attitude of the Orthodox Church, which obscurely sensed and supported the popular demand for a Russian Czar, born in Russia. After Polish forces had vainly besieged the Kremlin itself, after Swedish troops had been called in to restore order, after the country had been overrun by looting bands of Don Cossacks from one end to the other, in 1613 there came at last peace. The boyars sank their differences sufficiently to elect Michael Romanov to the throne, and the influence of Poland, always hated and loathed by the Russians, came to an end.

During these years, and increasingly under the first years of the new Romanov dynasty, the chief social phenomenon in Russia was the growth of serfdom. Serfdom had always existed, undisturbed from the Middle Ages, on the estates of the great landowners. These estates were continually increasing, as Ivan himself followed the policy of making enormous grants of crown land and peas-

ants to the gentry he favoured. But as the country expanded and pushed its way over the Urals to Siberia, and into the Crimea to the Caspian, it became common for serfs to seek relief from intolerable conditions and burdens by escaping eastwards into freedom. This process became chronic throughout "the time of troubles." Instead of fighting for some of the numberless pretenders of the time, or waiting to be ravaged by the Cossacks, the serfs simply abandoned their estates and went off to the frontier. Every Czar during "the time of troubles" attempted to deal with this problem. Strong decrees forbade the transfer of serfs from any of the estates of the Church, the Crown, or the Service gentry. Still stronger decrees made flight a criminal offence to be punished by lashing and branding; at first five years were given as a time-limit during which runaways could be hunted out, then ten, finally in 1646 the time-limit was abolished, and any fugitive became an outlaw. Meantime the practice of selling peasants apart from the estate, simply went on despite the law against it, and had finally to be legalised in 1675. The peasant had no power of redress, being forbidden to bring any complaint against his master except that of state treason; the master could beat him, starve him, force him to work like a dog for the state taxes, which were continually increasing, and he must still

submit. The process was not the same as slavery, but was clearly even more cruel in its effects than slavery. A bad crop, an epidemic, or an outbreak of trouble among the rebellious Cossacks of the Southeast frontier was enough to literally ruin thousands of peasants. And since the peasant could not fly without becoming an outlaw, the subsequent history of Russia down to the nineteenth century is punctuated with constant and perpetual serf rebellions and peasant risings.

The Russian government system of degrading its own independent peasantry down to the level of chattel slaves, was closely paralleled by the gradual growth of a dependent slave class within the nominally free American colonies. Negro slaves were brought into the Virginia Colony as early as 1619. Without their aid it is probable that the great tobacco plantations could not have been run at a profit. But the rapid extension of territory which tobacco-planting entailed led to the first outbreak of revolutionary class war in America in 1676. The occasion was an outbreak of trouble with the Indians on the northern frontier, which by that time had reached the Potomac. A rising of the Susquehannahs led to a demand on the part of the colonists for an armed force to destroy the Indians. The Governor, Berkeley, refused and proposed to build forts. But the colo-

nists under Nathaniel Bacon simply refused to obey; and this struggle soon became a conflict between the old conservative and royalist land-owning gentry and the newly arrived poorer settlers of the frontier. It was quelled; but over-production of tobacco in the years that followed led to much burning of tobacco, and a gradual transformation of Virginia, the most English in spirit of all the colonies, into a revolutionary democracy. In the Carolinas, where rice and cotton became the chief crops, negro slavery flourished better; and with the spread of American territory into the Mississippi Valley, it became rooted as an institution, despite the fact that, theoretically, it was in conflict with the spirit of the people.

The New England colonies on their part did not need any urging to become thoroughly rebellious to England's authority. Charles II on his return to the throne in 1660 had already concluded to make them more amenable to the common usages of England. These usages comprised a respect for the established church, which had never been recognized in Massachusetts, and toleration for the Quakers (whom Charles personally favoured) who had been repeatedly fined, whipped, and made to suffer banishment at the hands of the sectaries of Boston. In 1676 Charles' agent, Randolph, recommended that the Massachusetts charter be de-

clared forfeit. This was done in 1684, and all the New England charters followed suit. Charles died before he could show the full scope of his intentions, but under James II, the whole of the New England region, including Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine, Plymouth, Rhode Island, and Connecticut fell under the sway of a single governor, who was to rule without an assembly, with the aid of a council. A meeting house in Boston was to be set apart for the Church of England. The governor whom James appointed, Andros, met with opposition from the outset. The people refused to pay the taxes which their own old assemblies had voted, now that they were demanded by Andros acting alone. Rebellion was rampant throughout New England and in New York, where Andros governed through a deputy, Francis Nicholson. The rebellion came to a head when in November 1688 the government of James II fell in England itself, and was succeeded by that of William of Orange, in which the Parliament and the Whig party of the middle class finally triumphed over the old loyal aristocracy. From that time on, the American colonies were resolutely bent on self-government, and in New England and Virginia at least, on pushing back the Indians, and gaining control of the interior, in which the French were now hoping to build up a great overseas

empire. Between them lay the recently founded colony of Pennsylvania which alone, through the Quakers, took up a pacific attitude towards England. Southwards there was more loyalty in the newly-founded Carolinas; but there was also a semi-feudal agrarian society that, sooner or later, would challenge the North.

2

We have now come to the year 1688, which marks a turning point in American Colonial History, with the advent of the Whig oligarchy founded by the mercantile class, and supported by William III and the new House of Orange. In the same year, or a little later, Peter the Great who had been nominally ruler of Russia since 1682, finally got the power in his hands, by crushing the Streltsy and exiling the Regent. Henceforth the two countries were to run their course of development side by side.

It may be that the kind of reader whose mind is absorbed in statistics, will here object: "There is really no parallel between a few insignificant English-speaking colonies, planted on the far side of the Atlantic, and consisting in 1690 of only two hundred thousand souls, with a frontier running only fifty miles away from the seaboard, and the older, more populous, if largely unformed realm of

Muscovy." But history teaches that the mere size of a country has nothing whatever to do with its importance in the story of human development. If size and power to wage war were the sole criterion of importance, the Roman Empire might logically be considered as having given more to humanity at large than the whole of Ancient Greece and Judea. We know that this is not so. Ancient Greece and Judea were each in their way more spiritually important than Rome for the original ideas that they gave to the common stock; and already in America, as in Russia, an original idea was at work, which was profoundly to influence Europe. It is as creators of new values that these two countries should be studied and understood by the historian; not as economic, geographic, and political entities. If we consider them purely under the latter heading, they have been of somewhat less importance to Europe and the world at large, than the South American Republics.

The years that had passed in Russia since 1613, when the Romanov line first came to power, up to Peter's full accession in 1689, were important chiefly as witnessing a fresh consolidation of power about the representatives of this new dynasty. Poland, which had been the chief enemy, pursued its path of disintegration into its component atoms, under the feudal system still in vogue. It was

nominally ruled by an assembly of its gentry, which had the power of electing the King. Unfortunately the decisions of this national assembly had to be unanimous. In case the national assembly disagreed with any one of the delegates from the innumerable local assemblies, the delegate in question could interpose a free veto on any decision taken. The minority had also the right of combining for the sake of resistance against the majority, with the result that the whole country was continually racked by threats of civil war. Poland in short had carried the principle of feudal rights out to their logical end in a complete states' rights government. It was in the same unhappy position as the American colonies themselves, in regard to its own central government, but unlike the American colonies, it had no body of independent merchants to fall back upon as a rallying point in its internal struggle. It consisted of nothing but the great landed proprietors who had become separate military establishments, intensely jealous of each other, and the peasants, who were in a worse condition even than the Russian peasants, inasmuch as their masters had full control of their labour, could parade them for extra work, could force them to buy their necessaries from them, refused their rights to make contracts, fixed their wages, and had over them the absolute power of life and death. All export trade

was in the hands of the gentry and all rights of sitting in the local and national assemblies. The only exceptions were the despised Jews who had become the money-lending class, and were equally hated of noblemen and peasants.

Against decaying Poland, Russia had step by step built up a great empire. But the Empire was worthless to her, unless she could obtain foreign tools and arms, trade and an outlet to the sea. Under the Romanovs the first great efforts were made to acquire these essentials. Arms were imported, first from Sweden, later from Germany. A whole colony of Saxons, Dutchmen, and other foreign artisans were brought to Moscow and established in the so-called German Suburb. In 1647 a western system of drill was introduced and foreign instructors were brought in to train Russian regiments. Articles of western luxury made their appearance: clocks, velvets, stone houses to replace wooden huts, schools, and theatres which gave plays in foreign languages. But transport was still difficult, bad, and toilsome, much in the same condition as it was and remained on the American continent up to the advent of the Industrial Revolution in 1840. The only difference was that the American colonies lay far apart, settled in river valleys running down to the coast, and separated by great stretches of uninhabited country, whereas in Rus-

sia, Moscow was still at the centre of affairs. The result was that in America's case, each colony lived largely on its own specific products. Cotton and rice came from the Carolinas, tobacco from Maryland and Virginia, iron from Pennsylvania and New Jersey, furs from New York, fish and pine timber from New England. Trade abroad was more important than trade at home. In Russia the whole volume of trade—Siberian minerals and furs, Volga grain, Baltic pine, Persian carpets,—rolled and ebbed through the single heart of Moscow and its outlying city-states, bound together not by roads but by rivers.

In neither country was there anything resembling a system of education, or any independent development towards general culture. In this respect indeed the American colonies for all their inferiority in numbers and scale, were ahead of the Russians. The Old Church Slavonic, which was for conversational or writing purposes totally dead, was still used for all Church services. The ecclesiastics were almost the only learned class, and the attempts of the Romanovs to reform the Church books merely led to the violent schism of the "old believers" who came to hold Peter himself as the Antichrist. The educated classes aimed to speak German or French, and despised their own language. Schools there were none, and most education was

to be sought abroad. In the American Colonies, on the other hand, the desire for native education manifested itself early. Harvard College was incorporated as early as 1650; in Virginia, William and Mary followed in 1693; Yale in 1701. True, this education in the colonies had for the most part been inaugurated for the sole purpose of training candidates for the ministry, and had a strongly Puritan and theological tinge; but most Americans at least acquired an ability to speak and write good English, and some smattering of Latin.

Meantime, in both countries, the throes of establishment were safely over, and the first great expansion of effort rapidly followed. The expansion was an expansion of land surface and population in America; the latter increasing from two hundred thousand in 1690 to one and a half millions in 1760. In Russia it was an immense expansion of power, reacting on everyone from the Czar to the humblest serf. Peter himself was, after Ivan the Terrible, the first great military leader the Russians discovered, and he made good at last the claim to the Baltic, and therefore to the open sea, against the country that was now, under the successors of Gustavus Adolphus, mistress of that ocean: Sweden. Meantime, in America, the colonies were not allowed to settle back into complete enjoyment of their local liberties, won and ratified by King William's Gov-

ernment. During the next sixty years (1690-1750) they were to take part in no less than four wars, each waged against the power that had succeeded in penetrating further than any other into the true heart of the American continent: France.

From the time that Champlain in 1603 had come into the St. Lawrence Valley and had established Quebec as a trading post controlling the furs of this region, down to the settlement of the mouth of the Mississippi in 1718, and the later establishment of St. Louis and Natchez as trading posts controlling the traffic of the great interior valley, the French had been by far the most active power in the exploring of the interior of the American continent. In contrast with the English who had clung conservatively to the seaboard, they had boldly penetrated the very heart of the country; in contrast with the Spanish who had cared for nothing but the evidences of mineral wealth, and had ruthlessly warred upon and decimated the Indians, the French had attempted to live on terms of friendship with the native tribes, and had sought for the basis of their sway in the great wealth of fish, furs, and game the country possessed. The St. Lawrence, the Great Lakes, the Mississippi had each in turn felt the impress of the French effort, and had there been any fever of colonization to back the hardihood of the French explorers, traders, and

Jesuit missionaries, it is possible that to-day the French language, rather than the English tongue, might be the common speech over most of the United States. Unfortunately there was little disposition on the part of the French people to migrate to the new world. A mere meagre handful, some three thousand in all, including the fisheries of Nova Scotia, held the whole of Canada in 1660; in 1750 about six thousand persons inhabited the whole Louisiana territory. The French could not be induced to come and settle in the newly discovered territory; their own local instincts of traditional loyalty to their provinces, and their own internal stability, which have made of France the most economically self-contained country in Europe, forbade. But the mere existence of French trading posts throughout the St. Lawrence and Great Lake territory, the vague but shadowy grip that France had established upon the whole hinterland of the American continent, frightened King William and his ministers, and coincided with their determination to break the contemporaneous claim of France to leadership in Europe itself. There resulted the wars called King William's War, 1690-1697, Queen Anne's War, 1701-1713, King George's War, 1745-1748, and the great French and Indian War which beginning in 1753 ended with the complete annihilation of all of

France's dreams of foreign empire in the Treaty of Paris of February 1763.

The outcome of all these struggles was to leave the English masters of the American continent from the Gulf of Mexico to Labrador and westward to the Mississippi, including in their domain the chain of the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence basin. France retired from the American continent, leaving Spain—who had vainly allied herself with her in order to stop the English from invading Florida,—to keep a shadowy tenure on the western bank of the Mississippi. During the last phases of this conflict, the first great series of wars, except for Indian campaigns, waged on the American continent, Pennsylvania which had hitherto been pacific under the Quaker ascendancy, ranked itself alongside of the other colonies in the effort to break the French grip upon the headwaters of the Ohio. This was accomplished thanks largely to the persistence of one man, Benjamin Franklin. Meantime, Virginia had shown that in a young officer of militia, George Washington, it possessed a notable Indian fighter. Each colony in turn had raised a local militia to carry on the struggle to its triumphant success. Thus England had at last, through the alliance with the newly-born kingdom of Prussia, triumphed over France, destroyed her fleet, and succeeded in shaking off

her hold on India as well as America. But in order to do this England had created something that was to be of the utmost danger to her as time went on. She had created American solidarity. Exactly as Peter the Great by his personal effort, created Russian solidarity.

3

The subsequent history of both countries moves along the lines we have already been tracing. Peter the Great's most important achievement was not so much his successful wars against Sweden and Turkey, nor his establishment, as "a window looking on Europe," of a new capital on the shores of the Baltic, but the creation of a new state-bureaucracy to take the place of the dominance of the old nobility, a state-bureaucracy bound by self-interest to support his system, and which completed its task by assimilating the old Orthodox Russian Church (which had hitherto been independent, under its own Patriarch) into the state-machine, under the direct control of a Procurator of the Holy Synod. By this act, Peter destroyed the last possibility of a moral opposition to his rule, and fixed the system of autocracy beyond possibility of change as the only political form possible to Russia, subject solely to the chance that his successors might not possess the same force of character that he had dis-

played. Peter, in short, assimilated European statecraft, only to become more powerful than Europe. Meanwhile the American colonies, separated completely from each other by large tracts of waste country, and still more separated by differences of soil, religion, and social organization, found a rallying point in the feeling that the great western territory west of the Appalachians was to be theirs, and were, at the same time, provided by England with a force not only to conquer it but to assert their own independence, in the shape of a local militia. This force removed the last hope that England could hold the country by a display of military power, inasmuch as in New England, where the administrative centre was the township, the militia could be turned out at a moment's notice. Henceforth the South, whose administrative unit was the county, dropped back in the race for the supreme headship of the American continent. England, by creating a New England, had sown the seeds of her own downfall.

During the years that followed, while the great Virginia planters were living on enormous feudal estates, worked by small armies of slaves, and disregarding or despising the fringe of poorer squatters and settlers that to westward were already pushing across the Appalachians, the New England merchants and backwoodsmen were engaged

in a struggle with England that went on for years before exploding in an outbreak of open revolution. The first phase of the struggle was over the Navigation Acts, whereby England after 1650 had striven to control the growing trade with the Colonies. By the most severe of these Acts nothing could be shipped in or out of the Colonies except by English or Colonial vessels, and the Colonies themselves were forbidden to trade with any other power except England. This prohibition did not affect the Southern planter aristocracy, inasmuch as they had no manufactures, and no shipping, and sent out their agricultural products mainly and regularly in English vessels to England, obtaining therefrom, even in Washington's day, their clothes, tools, and equipment. But the New England colonies, unagricultural and mercantile, opposed the Navigation Acts, necessarily. They had already become shipbuilding powers, and regularly exported enormous quantities of dried fish to Spain, Portugal, the West Indies, obtaining in return quantities of Spanish-grown cane sugar to be turned into New England rum, which again was exchanged for slaves in Africa, tea in China, silks and spices in the East. New England was growing into a competitive shipping and mercantile power alongside of England, so the Navigation Acts were continually being evaded in the Northern Colonies. The

second phase of colonial opposition arose over taxation, notably over the taxation of tea which particularly affected the Northern Colonies. The story of the Boston Tea Party is too well known for me to have to refer to it. The last phase arose over the general bureaucratic meddling with the affairs of the colonies, expressed in the Stamp Act. In all these underground struggles, the New England Colonies took the lead, with the Southerners a bad second, and it is from this date that we must look to the New Englanders with their completely commercial morality, their Yankee cunning, and their fanatic dissenting Puritanism, as most expressive of the direction in which America was travelling.

Thus while the drift of American sentiment gradually coalesced and hardened against England, more and more strayed from the ordered control of the Virginia planter aristocracy to the radical experimentalism of the New England merchant group, the drift of Russian sentiment was hardening in favour of Peter's foreign-modelled civil service and military establishment. In both cases a radical and arbitrary minority was beginning to control the sluggish and conservative majority. Underground, in South Russia particularly, smouldered the popular feeling against the innovations of Peter and his successors. It could do noth-

ing because it lacked the weapons wherewith to fight. Peter had taken good care to keep the army loyal to him. But during Peter's reign it burst out in the revolt of the Old Believers; and in Catherine the Great's period, which covered the years when the American Colonies made their successful stand against England, it exploded on the south-east Volga frontier among the Cossacks, in the open class-war rebellion of Pugachev. Both Russia and America came into power by building up systems of government that rested upon a profound inner dualism. The dualism in America came from a struggle between the aristocratic, agrarian, and conservative South, and the democratic, mercantile, and independently-minded North and East. In Russia it sprang from the opposition between the brilliant and sceptical state-machine, pursuing its warlike ambitions even further into Europe, and the inert, superstitious mass of the peasantry, particularly of the lower Volga region, which was groaning under the weight of taxes necessary to keep the state-service going, and unable—thanks to serfdom—to retaliate except by open rebellion.

We have already pointed out that there exists a parallel between Egypt and Babylonia, in Russia and America. Here again that parallel must be alluded to. As in Babylonia, the state-religion was at the outset composed of a series of regional cults,

only welded later by military force into the universal worship of the central Babylonian sun-and-war-god Marduk, so in Russia the force of dissenting regional sentiment contended against the deliberate state-policy of making the Czar central autocrat of all the Russias and sole head of the Church. As in Egypt, the religious struggle was between the sun-god, Ra of the North, whose symbol was a golden disk, and the vegetation-god, Osiris of the South, whose symbol was the tree of life, so in America there was always tension between the agricultural South and the industrial, gold-worshipping North. Russia could only keep going so long as the Czar was victorious; America could only keep going so long as the two divergent sections of its people fused into one. Unless we keep these differences in mind we cannot understand either country. And it is only by meditating upon them that we can fully understand all the world-transformations that were historically to come into being from the creation of Russia and the United States.

The process that we have been following culminated in Catherine the Great and in Washington. These two historical and contemporary figures not only represent immense landmarks in human history, but are symbolical for long into the future, up to the threshold even of our own day, of the power that is Russia, and is America. In studying

them as completely representative of the inner development we have been following, we become witnesses of a phenomenon not common to human history; the rise of two cultures side by side. This had happened before in antiquity in the parallel growth of the Babylonian-Assyrian and the Egyptian civilisations, which were, like Russia and America in later times, river countries, and which were divided by the land-bridge of Palestine and the Arab peninsula from each other. The later powers, Russia and America, faced each other across the whole world, and where Russia depended upon Europe for intellectual leadership, arms and appliances, America depended on Europe for physical support, and eventually for political independence itself. Nowhere is this more clear than in the period we have now to study; the period of Catherine in Russia, of Washington in America. Where Catherine interested herself at the outset of her reign in Voltaire and Rousseau, wrote plays herself in the French vein, was a brilliant leader of theoretical intellectualism, many-sided and fascinating at the outset, and ended as an ageing tyrant; Washington, the typical American of his time, was a plain, blunt, country squire, intensely practical, not particularly brilliant, with but one idea in his mind, the free expansion of the colonies westward, who, despite himself, was dragged into

the current of Rousseauism and Voltairism practised by such spirits as Paine and Jefferson, and ended as a retired moderate and a private citizen. No more startling divergence could be found between countries so similar geographically and climatically. There is something even more interesting, psychologically and symbolically, in the fact that Catherine the Great was a woman who had begun as a needy adventuress without a drop of Russian blood in her veins, while Washington was a man who began as a wealthy land-owner of the most conservative and long-rooted Virginian aristocracy. In both cases, the situation found the one figure that could control it. In order to conquer Europe, Russia had to find someone relentlessly efficient, utterly unsentimental, theoretically advanced, but so profoundly imbued with the desire to increase personal prestige as to be unwilling to bate a jot of power; this was Catherine. In order to prevent the separation from Europe from becoming a mere revulsion to anarchic chaos, America had to find someone broad-mindedly tolerant, aristocratically reserved, practical in outlook, so steady of purpose as never to be swayed by any personal misfortune. This was Washington. Catherine's reign (1762-1796) led to the final destruction of Poland, brilliant military victories over Turkey, terrible peasant misery at home, and the establish-

ment of Russia as the greatest military power threatening the whole of Europe; Washington's period of ascendency as General and President (1776-1797) led to complete independence from England, immense expansion westwards, an ever-widening rift between the agricultural South and the commercial North, and the final establishment of America as a power completely isolated, and determined to seek no further "world-entanglements," but to create its own political destiny.

Chapter IV

UP to a short time before America was discovered, and Russia emerged on the stage of the world's affairs under Ivan the Great, Europe had been a social, moral, and spiritual unity. This unity, despised and blackened by the apostles of enlightenment in the eighteenth century, under the title of "the feudal system," had been developing from the fourteenth century onwards in the wrong direction of nationalist monarchy, instead of in the only right one of such a popularly grounded, elective feudalism as we find foreshadowed in the writings of Plato, More, or Campanella. At its highest and best, it had not succeeded in preventing such purely political wars as the dynastic struggle of the later Plantagenets with France, or the heroic struggle of the Holy Roman Empire with the papacy, or the civil struggle between the burghers of the free towns and the feudal overlords; but it must also be remembered on the credit side of the balance, that it had also promoted the largely idealistic effort of the Crusaders, the unified social and moral enlightenment of monasticism, and had

created as well a great common language of art, rooted in popular symbolism, a common faith unified in outward observance, and, in its great revival of Latin, a common speech whereby scholars from all parts of Europe might easily understand each other.

These are compensation enough, in such minds as realize their complete lack of such rallying points to-day, for the failure of those days to achieve telephones or modern sanitation. The same order of thought that had re-established centres of culture and philosophy after the complete breakdown of the old Roman order in the eighth century, continued its effort almost unimpaired up to the close of the fifteenth. We still in a measure to-day partake of as many of its fruits as the failure of discipline, represented by the revival of nationalistic warring powers in the fourteenth, the revival of new learning in the fifteenth, and the Protestant and counter-Catholic reformations of the sixteenth, have left to us. At its apex, in the thirteenth century, life from the North Cape to Palestine, from Cornwall to the Carpathians, was of one piece throughout. As the next world was divided into the realms of heaven, purgatory, and hell, so this world was divided into its appropriate realms: the king's palace, the feudal castle, the cathedral, the abbey, the market town, the guildhall, the peasant's

hut. Over all lay the spiritual sway of a unified ecclesiastic order, the solid power of Catholic Christianity. Towards the east lay the less intelligent, less rationally disciplined, more thaumaturgic and despotically absolute power of the Orthodox Greek faith, which had been completely separated from the western faith since the ninth century, and which revolved about the decaying court of Constantinople. With the fall of that capital in 1456 and the consequent driving of a wedge by the Turks into the heart of Christianity, the rift between the Eastern and the Western churches had become chronic, and the Eastern Church had grown more and more hidebound and static, remote from anything resembling forward-looking Christianity. A little before this event, there had come about—thanks to the failure of the Crusades and the spirit of growing commercialism—the rise of a new burgher class and their alliance with the purely political and dynastic ambitions of a nationalist monarchy, which took place first in France, and later in England.

It is worth noticing that both these countries lay on the western borders of Europe. In Spain, too, a nationalist monarchy developed, but it was dependent on the support of the old feudal nobility rather than the bourgeoisie, had its own internal problems to settle in the fact that part of the coun-

try lay in the hands of the Mohammedans, and did not in any case exert much influence abroad earlier than the sixteenth century. Italy, unable to find a single ruler, was rapidly sinking into the gulf of anarchy through which the torrent of the Renaissance made its way, to peter out on the shoals of academicism and realistic sentimentality. But soon after 1492, the date of Columbus' discovery of the New World, the most startling sign that a new order had come into being in the world was furnished by Germany. In 1517 in the very heart of the Holy Roman Empire of legend and heroic achievement for the Catholic faith, the Augustinian monk Luther posted his theses to the church door at Wittenberg. This was three years before Cortez completed his conquest of Mexico, or Magellan made the first circumnavigation of the globe. The subsequent process known as the Reformation, whether in its early Protestant or later Catholic manifestation, paid no heed to the great spiritual unity of the past. It rested entirely on social and economic factors. Consciously or not, it either supported or failed to combat the nationalist morality to which religion was to be subservient, of which morality we have reaped the latest fruits in the outburst of unspiritually motivated hatred that accompanied the Great War. Its chief result was the

complete separation of Northern Teutonic and Southern Mediterranean Christianity.

If we could construct a thought map as opposed to a nationalist map of Europe about the year 1550, we would find that Europe was no longer in any sense a unity. Europe then, as since, fell readily into two halves. The dividing line was never totally clear, but the northern and western part of Europe was predominantly Protestant, as the eastern and southern remained predominantly Catholic. In the western half of Europe, Spain was the strongest of Catholic outposts; but Spain had her last triumph in 1570, the year of Lepanto, and eighteen years later was to know her first heavy defeat in the destruction of the Armada. In opposition to Catholicism were England, the Scandinavian countries, a considerable portion of France, notably the south-western half, and practically all of northern and western Germany. Southern Germany, like Bavaria, remained Catholic, but Switzerland again became Protestant. On the other hand, Italy, Austria, Bohemia, Hungary, Poland, remained Catholic to the core.

Thus it came about that America became open —especially after the defeat of the Spanish Armada—to colonization from Western and Protestant European countries, while Russia, despite

Ivan the Terrible's attempt to find a *rapprochement* with England, became open to influence from Eastern Europe, which was predominantly feudal and Catholic. The outcome was to make Russia more and more feudal and autocratic, while America became more and more *bourgeois* and Protestant. After Peter the Great's time, Russia presented to Europe the image of an autocracy of a little more logical and thorough-going stamp than the autocracy practised in France and Spain; after King William's War, America became a democracy a little more advanced and complete than the type of successful commercial democracy governing England.

Both countries, nevertheless, sought for a common ideal in the past. Russia, as refounded by Ivan the Great, proclaimed its kinship with Rome. It was the "third Rome," the first being the Rome of Augustus, the second the Rome of Byzantium. The mystic idea that the *pallium* of world-empire had travelled from Rome to Constantinople and from Constantinople, in the wake of Ivan the Great's bride, the Empress Sophia, to Moscow, where it was to be firmly established for ever, ruled Russian State policy from 1490 up to the outbreak of the Bolshevik revolution in 1917. It invested the Romanovs and their successors, who were not even Russian in essence, with semi-divine authority

and mystery. It was perhaps the basis of such a startling stroke of policy as Catherine the Great's offering open asylum to the Jesuits after their banishment from France and Spain. At the same time, the thirteen American colonies, newly established, began playing with the notion that they too were Rome—but Rome of the republic, Rome of the Latian league. This idea was markedly materialistic and rationalistic, as the Russian idea was markedly mystical and emotional. It grew to enormous proportions after the Revolution, when the infant Republic was shaken to its foundations by the revelations concerning the Society of the Cincinnati. Thus over the background of Russia and America, the patterns of different Romes grew and spread.

That background was nomadic, centrifugal, primitive in both cases. In America it was a background of hunters and fishers, trappers, traders, and roving Redskins. It was Franco-Spanish, Spanish-Indian. The type of man that this background was producing—and continued to produce after the first Anglo-Saxons crossed the Alleghany barrier—was the self-assertive, independent, inventive, resourceful hunter and fighter. The fact that the country was wilderness, largely forested, with poor communications and few openings for trade, added to Spanish adventurousness, Norman-

French daring, and Anglo-Saxon fanaticism a fresh tang. If people could not agree together under law on major points of religion or minor points of social observance, all that was necessary was to kill off or frighten away a few Indians with firearms and to live isolated, far apart. In this respect the North American family soon became a wandering tribe, liable to the most casual accretions from without and to the most arbitrary splits and divisions of sentiment, except in districts early settled, where the common bonds of a unified stock and better communications served to hold the clan together. In the middle and western colonies, the white colonist soon took on, in his dealings with his neighbours, and in his disposition to rove about, the colours of Indian life.

The Russian too had his background, but the background was Tartar. It was a life either agricultural or nomadic, like the American life, but that which made and kept the country productive was not the independent desire to make fortunes and to seek new fields for themselves on the part of an active population, but a profound acceptance of inner necessity on the part of an inert one. The Tartar-Russian temperament was inert, or stung to sudden action under the pressure of crisis, while the American temperament was active, sinking to inertia only under the stimulus of growing pros-

perity. What drove the Russians to migrate was not the sense of a new horizon to be attained, or a new horizon to be conquered, but the mere desire to escape from an unchanging round, an inner need to stand aloof from the village and its elders, the landowner's mansion and its barns, the bloodthirsty Cossack, or the life-sapping tax-gatherer. That was because from the beginning the Russian family had not been a family in the American sense, but a great collection of souls: feudal retainers, house and farm serfs, and distant tributaries. In Russia, and more particularly in the steppes of Southern and Eastern Russia, apart from the trading centres of the North Russia forest belt, the peasant tended continually to revert to the colours of pure Tartar and nomad life.

Thus we may safely say, without fear of contradiction, that the European influence, transported to America, lost its ordered English characteristics, and became something more akin to Spanish buccaneering or the loose confederacy of Indian tribes; while the same influence, exerted on Russia from her western borders, made that country a Late-Latin imperium, greatly modified by the spirit of Tartar nomadry. This remarkable transformation was due, after all sociological, racial, religious factors have been weighed and dismissed, primarily to climatic and geological factors. In neither Rus-

sia nor North America is nature a friendly factor, nor is it possible there to look on man as an "addition to nature" nor as the "measure of all things" in the Greco-Latin sense. Both countries had climates of exceptional severity, vast stretches of soil of inferior productiveness, a population thinly scattered, and lacking, until the later growth of railways, in means of communication. The most fertile agricultural region of America, the Mississippi valley, lay far inland through enormous forests, at the mercy of floods and malaria, as the most fertile region of Russia, the Volga basin, lay on the remote Caspian frontier, at the mercy of steppe winds, and consequent famine and typhus. Psychologically, the Russian and the American reacted differently to this situation. In Russia, the influx of Tartar blood resulted in making the majority of the race fatalistic, sensual, lazy, with a tendency towards a curious mingling of pantheism and sacramental Christianity. In America, the influx of Anglo-Saxon Puritanism made the majority reckless, highstrung, extremely active, with a tendency towards a mingling of outward practical sense and inward moral fanaticism.

From the date when America and Russia appeared on the horizon, we can trace the steady rise of European individualism. The revolutionary impulse of Europe has always been an affair of

outstanding individuals, perhaps of small minorities: even the French Revolution was ultimately accomplished by a few outstanding clever politicians, centering on Paris. The revolutionary impulse, on the other hand, in both America and in Russia, has been an affair of mass-movements. Washington was intellectually merely the ordinary American landowner of his time; Lenin the ordinary provincial noble. Such revolutionary upheavals as Alexander Second's freeing of the serfs, or America's Civil War, came about not through the agitation of any single body of men, but by a combination of interests: economic and sentimental. In Russia, it was necessary for the emancipation of the serfs to take place, because the system of Nicholas I, which had relied on foreign conquest to ensure the prosperity of the country, had broken down; and the system of serfdom, which had really only flourished in the black soil belt of South Russia, was, as Alexander II said, "in danger of abolishing itself from below." In America it became increasingly necessary to limit the field of the slave-holding class to the Lower Southern States, or the economic control of the financier and trading class in the North would be threatened by the irruption of slave-holders into the rich Western territory and the consequent creation of an agrarian imperialism. None of the changes that took place in

American or Russian political life during the nineteenth century were so arbitrary as the violent cross-currents that, during the same time, affected Europe.

The advance of Russia and America throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was not without its influence in Europe, or rather on the type of European genius that Europe was to produce. The rise of the Jesuit order within the Catholic church and the corresponding and opposed rise of mystical non-conformist sects such as swarmed in the latter eighteenth century,—for example, Wesleyanism and Swedenborgianism—were its first symptoms in the religious field. The corresponding decline in architecture into the extravagances of later baroque, or the frigidities of academic classicism, or the false romanticism of the Gothic revival, mark its influx in the field of architecture. Such individual geniuses as Voltaire or Kant, Blake or Beethoven, Carlyle or Nietzsche, Ibsen or Shaw, reveal the same splitting up of Europe into efficiently Americanised revolutionary and sceptically Catholicised reactionary as was going on elsewhere. Henceforth Europe, or European life, was no longer a unity; and only a unity can produce great social movements, such as had culminated in previous centuries in a Dante, a Shakespeare, an Aquinas, a Bach, a Cervantes, or a

Racine. From the outset of the nineteenth century, the individual in Europe became more important than his age. It was only outside the frontiers of Europe, in Russia or in America, that the age was to remain more important than the individual.

2

It was through the deliberately exercised will of a minority that Russia and America became independent; and this minority consisted in both cases of people who had been largely Europeanised. Left to themselves, the Russians would have relapsed into nomad savagery; their unity was imposed on them by a long list of ambitious princes, from Ivan the Great down to Peter the Great, whose eyes were directed continually towards Europe. Left to themselves, the true Americans —the early Spanish, French, and English colonists—might have conceivably remained as divided and sparsely scattered settlements surrounded by a fringe of Indians and wilderness: their contact with the outer world was kept up by a long list of Puritan divines and southern aristocrats armed with muskets, law books, and Bibles, and busily transplanting into the wilderness the fundamental contrast between European Whig and Tory. Up to 1688, the date of the Whig revolution in Eng-

land and its reverberation in the Colonies in the shape of King William's War, the whole history of the American colonies was nothing but chaos and anarchy. The successive squabbles with governors, the successive acceptance and dismissal of royal proprietors, the successive guerilla wars with the Indians, form a complex labyrinth of greed, intrigue and baseness not easy to match anywhere. It was only through influence and pressure from without, from England, that any civilisation kept itself alive at all. Likewise in Russia, the small body of German, Dutch, Italian artisans, architects, engineers, scholars, soldiers of fortune and sycophants that filled the German suburb at Moscow from 1500 to 1688, transformed Russia under Peter the Great, and continued to do so under Elizabeth and Catherine.

The ruling minority in America curried favour with one or the other of the political parties that happened to be in the ascendant in England; in Russia, as the peasant was illiterate, the minority had to curry favour with the Czar himself. During the reigns of Peter, of Elizabeth, and Catherine, Russian literature—that is to say, literature written in the Russian language, as distinguished from Old Church Slavonic—made its appearance. The most potent weapon of civilisation, the written word, was snatched once and for all from the hands of the

Orthodox monks and Metropolitans, whose chronicles had been hitherto the sole means of expression, and given to the secular powers, the outstanding nobles, upon whose support the safety of Czardom really rested. This literature, in both cases, was to take its intellectual tone from Europe, its sentimental pretexts only were Russian or American.

The influence of such Republican speculations as James Harrington's "Oceana" influenced the one, as the influence of the sentimental naturalism of Diderot and the Encyclopædists influenced the other. At about the same time, and under the same conditions, the power of the Old New England theocracy, and of the Byzantine family-order began to wane, and the control of expression of opinion began to pass to the thriving but new commercial communities of St. Petersburg, New York, Charleston and Odessa.

To both new countries Europe was like a great land-bridge, representing an older, more powerful, more refined civilisation. The ideas that prevailed in America or in Russia were not only derived from this body of thought, but were applied to conditions that were totally different. In the case of Russia, the central authority of the Czar, the nobles and the bureaucracy, attempted to transform an inert mass of semi-Oriental serfdom into something resembling a modern nationalistic monarchy. In the case

of America, the most prosperous classes, the independent merchants and bankers, attempted to fuse an inchoate mass of fanatics, planters and frontiersmen into a political unity which was democratic and federal. The ideas upon which both worked came from Europe; in the case of Russia the model sought after was the model of the unified French monarchy, the Prussian State, the Austrian Empire. In the case of America the model unconsciously followed was that of the Greek city-states, or of the principalities of the Italian Renaissance.

Long ago, if we look far enough back in history, the empires of Babylonia-Assyria and of Egypt had been states dependent on great river systems for their unity. They had sprung up independently, while the land-bridge that lay between them, Palestine and Moab, being highland and desert, was not only at a lower stage of culture, but, under the Amorites and Hittites, became a body of traders, borrowing from each in turn, and profiting by their situation in the territory where lay the chief caravan routes between the two great centres of Babylon and Heliopolis, to develop finally an independent view-point and a composite race-unity for itself under the Semites. With Russia and America, the same process was reversed. Europe lay as a land-bridge between Russia and America. But this land-bridge, as a unified civilisation, had already

passed its maximum, and was headed for decline. Now certain elements of that civilisation were to pass beyond Europe's frontiers into two countries, hitherto undeveloped, which were founded upon river-systems. In Russia these elements were such as could seek a common centre about the Czardom of Muscovy. In America, these elements were such as could build themselves into harmony with the commercial classes of the Atlantic seaboard controlling the river-ways that led into the interior.

3

The "third Rome" that Russia proclaimed herself to be, at the time when the Muscovite Czars became predominant in its affairs, was essentially the mystical, inner Rome of the Byzantine Cæsars. Deriving its authority from seclusion, intrigue, separation between court and people, it accepted none as leader save he who had passed over the portal of the Cathedral of the Transfiguration and had received on his forehead the holy chrism from the hands of the Orthodox Patriarch; however much he may have despised that patriarch in his heart, as did Peter and Catherine. But America founded a Rome of another sort, and in this Rome, democratic and enterprising, none was to be accepted as leader save he who had turned his back upon the ruling

party in England and maintained, in combined political and religious thinking, his independence of the motherland. Thus the two wings of the embodied Imperial idea persisted in separation beyond Europe's frontiers; and the age of their uprise was the age of the decline of the Imperial idea in Europe. Both America and Russia came on the stage of the world's affairs at the time of the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire; both rose to power during the period of intense nationalism that followed; and both played important parts in the final overthrow of Napoleon, who may be said to have attempted to restore an Empire by the power of his sword alone, when as a social and spiritual ideal, it was already dead.

In order to understand the sort of Rome America founded, we must look back to the legendary sources of England. The study of legendary history is often more valuable to the sociological investigator than the study of actual events. The latter merely tells us what a people were able to accomplish under changes of weather and economic prosperity, the pressure of external influence, the million and one contributory causes which make up the life and state of well or ill-being of the community from day to day. Legendary history, on the other hand, reveals the goal steadily aimed at, the ideal to which all aspired, the psychical centre about

which all this activity revolves. Thus we cannot understand the Greeks without a study of Achilles, Odysseus, Theseus. The fatalistic bravery, the wily shiftiness, the adventurous courage of a whole folk, are here summed up. Rama and Krishna tell us more about India than the pages of Indian history, which are, as a matter of fact, mostly blank; nor is America itself comprehensible without reference to such quasi-legendary figures as Parson Weems' Puritanic fixation of Washington, Davy Crockett, Andrew Jackson, or Daniel Boone. The legendary history of England is to be found in the pages of Geoffrey of Monmouth's History; and as the story told therein is essentially representative of what many English minds of the twelfth century believed to have been the truth, desired to make the truth, it is necessary to look into it.

According to this account, Britain was founded by a Trojan prince, a grandson of Æneas himself, founder of Rome. That such a thing is doubly impossible, we now know, and we are apt to laugh at Geoffrey for putting it forward. Yet even this legend may contain some substratum of truth. The Latian tribes, from which the Romans came, were undoubtedly subject to much Phœnician influence, and there is reason to suspect that the Western Britons, at least, were also subject to some early Phœnician influence. The "Trojans," whoever

they were, may have been a Phœnician people, or a legend retailed by the Phœnicians. At all events, we need not laugh at Geoffrey for his feeble arch spanning the abyss between little Britain and majestic Rome. The fact is, that almost everybody in England, rich or poor, (except perhaps a few clerics who are by nature adepts at concealing both the truth and their doubts) believed in Geoffrey's time, and for several hundred years later, that the Britons were the descendants of the Trojans, and that under Arthur, their greatest king, they had conquered thirty other kingdoms, and had been on the point of conquering Rome itself when Mordred, Arthur's nephew, seized crown and queen. This belief was so strong that Henry II, at the end of the twelfth century, was not only induced to rebuild Glastonbury, but his abbot, Henry of Blois, discreetly "found" the tomb of Arthur there, in order to put a stop to persistent rumors concerning the king's possible reappearance. And the belief was renewed, when under the Tudors, a remote descendant of ancient British kings mounted the throne of his ancestors, thus fulfilling the prophecy of Merlin.

The belief that prevailed in England after the Norman Conquest and throughout the Middle Ages —and this belief was all the more powerful because it was popular, unformulated, unrecognised by the

rationalism of the ruling orders—was that England was once on the point of conquering Rome, and that under the new monarchy it would reassume its position as head of the world's affairs. This faith came to its flower under the Tudors. Under Henry VIII the conquest of Rome became an accomplished fact. The poets, philosophers and divines of the time hailed the advent of Elizabeth in terms that made of her the equal, if not the superior, of any empress of antiquity. And it was precisely at this time that the newly-discovered realm of Virginia was thrown open; that Puritanic sectaries driven out of England by the machinery of the State Church which Tudors and Stuarts had set in action, Calvinistic upholders of that ascetic intolerance which the Catholics later were themselves to imitate, Congregationalist rebels against episcopal supervision, were to establish overseas a republican form of England—a third Rome. This feeling that the mother country, in alliance with Protestant and Colonial dissent, might become a primitive Roman commonwealth in opposition to the monarchial ideas of Renaissance Europe, prevailed throughout the great struggle of the Commons with Charles I, and the subsequent Cromwellian dictatorship. It is not for nothing that John Milton, before writing "Paradise Lost," meditated an epic on the old Arthurian story. The

"Cromwellian" tone of the old story lay closely akin to the rooted ambitions of his race.

In short where Russia, by a process of unconscious assimilation, became the successor of Byzantium and thus a bulwark against Europe, a mystically isolated bulwark, which only such unorthodox Czars as Peter, Catherine, and Alexander II dared to ignore,—America rose to power precisely by consciously reverting to the Rome of the tribunes and of warring patricians and plebeians, a Rome that found its first test in a conflict with another country that had already previously risen to imperial power. England became America's Carthage; Poland, Lithuania and Sweden became for Imperial Russia the analogues of the Greek city-states. From this fact, and from a host of subsidiary facts, arose the typical introverted attitude of the Russian and its opposite in the American. About the typical, one hundred per cent American one can learn everything but his feelings. His thoughts, his opinions, are all on the surface. America is to him the greatest of countries. American prosperity is the world's prosperity, American life is the ideal life, America's expansion is the expansion of the world's democratic hope into backward Europe and remote, superstitious Asia. Over this simple creed a Whitman, a Jefferson and an Emerson can shake hands. About a Russian you

know only his feelings. His opinions he is able to change with disconcerting completeness. A Tolstoy can change from the creed of "getting the best out of life for oneself and family," to a creed of ascetic denial of all the world's goods, with no loss of intensity; a Dostoevsky can somehow reconcile the inner conflict between mystic Slavophilism and underground rebellion against Christianity itself, without ceasing to be Dostoevsky Only a completely exiled American, like Henry James, or one who hankers after exile, like Poe, Hawthorne, or Melville, can fully exploit his feelings; only a completely exiled Russian, like Herzen, or one who hankers after exile like Turgenev, Tchekhov, or Pushkin himself, can maintain any constancy in opinion.

4

But this is not the place to discuss the mental attitudes implied in being an American and a Russian. That will come out more fully as we go on. For the moment we must revert to the course of our interrupted historical analysis, which was abandoned at the moment that the Americans, under Washington, made themselves the sole masters and controllers of the wealth of an immense continent, left by England in their hands; while at the same time the Russians under Catherine became masters

and controllers of the whole of Eastern Europe, and issued their first threat to shake off the power of the Turks from Constantinople. Each had accomplished this at the price of a daring alliance. Catherine had allied herself with Prussia, which in the preceding reign had been Russia's most important enemy, in order to destroy Poland utterly; America had allied herself with France, which twenty years before had appeared as the colonists' chief enemy, in order to conquer England. But the elaborate game of eighteenth century diplomacy that both had played, based as it was on balances of power, secret treaties, dynastic successions, bribings and spyings, and a cynical understanding of the foibles of human nature, was about to come to an end. In 1789 the French Revolution broke out, and the cause of eighteenth century monarchy collapsed in ruins. During the same year the first congress of the United States assembled, under the present American Constitution.

During the years that had elapsed since the British Government withdrew from the colonies in 1783, America had hardened from a confederation of semi-independent commonwealths rather on the Polish model, completely lacking in internal unity, to a federal republic. This transformation had come about thanks to three converging causes. In the first place, England, despite the Revolution, still

held a vague sway over the interior, and though promising to abandon her outposts in the Great Lake territory, refused to do so. This gave the colonists a reason for continuing to cling together, inasmuch as all were now equally interested in the hunger for land that possessed the settlers pushing forward beyond the Appalachian region. In the second place, without a central government, there was danger that the outlying settlements might be tempted by bribes and intrigue to throw in their lot with England again. Vermont actually attempted to do so; and in the new regions of Kentucky and Tennessee intrigue was going on with the Spaniards in occupation of Louisiana that boded equally ill. Moreover there was the question of the Indian tribes to settle; and the Great Lakes and Mississippi region not only provided the chief backbone of the Indian resistance, but were open to foreign agents ready to arm the Indians, against the Colonists. Lastly, the colonies had come out of the Revolution crippled with debt, and with a worthless currency. It was to the interest of the newly-born, independent banking community of New York, headed by Alexander Hamilton, to fund this debt and replace this currency with legal tender. Thanks to Hamilton and his associates, the Federal Union rested from the start upon the conservative money power. The outbreak of a

local rebellion in Massachusetts, the increasing trouble on the frontier, served but to centralise and focus the aims of the Colonists upon Federalism, and hasten the adoption of a constitution.

During the same time, the Russian autocracy under Catherine became more and more a question of the personal whim of whatever sovereign happened to be occupying the throne. Catherine had begun as theoretically liberal, but she had inherited a system that put unlimited power into her hands to play with, and the year before she came to the throne, the gentry were finally liberated from all obligations of state service. This left her free to carry on the machinery of government with the aid of any subordinates that would do her bidding absolutely, undeterred by patriotic, religious, or moral scruples. As Catherine was herself entirely without such scruples, and ruled alone by her passion for vanity and display, her favourites had the easy task of appealing to her baser side. Conquest was what Catherine wanted; whether it was to bedazzle Diderot and Voltaire, or to partition Poland, or to embark on a campaign with Turkey, she could not resist the lure of posing as the mistress of Europe. Frederick the Great, who from his desperate position as the leader of a folorn hope, gradually built up Prussia into a power to be reckoned with, understood this perfectly, and was not sparing of his

flatteries, while at the same time he watched with equal understanding the rise of the colonies, and wrote measured and intelligent eulogies of their leader Washington. The difficulty with Catherine's system, was that it depended altogether on her iron will, and she could do nothing to ensure the same determination to over-ride opposition for her successors. In order to go on she had to overlook the desperate peasant-rising created by Pugachev, to break with one favourite after another, and to treat with contempt the terrible outbreak of cholera that occurred in Moscow itself during her reign.

To both countries, the French Revolution came as a terrible shock. To Catherine it became apparent that unless the sovereigns of Europe acted in concert to save the French Monarchy, her own game was as good as lost. But unfortunately, the European sovereigns were indisposed to act together, and separately the Revolutionary armies easily beat them. To Washington and the most intelligent Americans, it soon became obvious that although America was in alliance with France, to maintain that alliance under new conditions would only lead to fresh European occupations of American soil, and to the condition that the colonists had already faced in the last years of the Revolution, when only the dwindling and ill-equipped Con-

tinental army stood between them and submission. In the outcome both countries, despite their previous embroilments in European politics, took a fresh step backward into isolation. In America that isolation was conscious and proclaimed; in Russia it was instinctive, subconscious, and uneasy. Its course in both cases, was charted and developed by the subsequent career of Napoleon.

We cannot understand Napoleon's character, nor the tragedy of his career, unless we grasp the fact that he was born in an atmosphere of local rebellion resembling exactly the rebellion of the American colonies under Great Britain. But in Corsica, this sort of thing was bound to fail, because the Corsicans did not have, like the American colonists, the undeveloped wastes and the boundless resources of a remote continent to fall back upon. Napoleon grew to manhood understanding that destiny would not consent to be on the side of European uprisings; and this understanding guided his mental orientation, first towards the idealistic Jacobins, whose real aim was a Constitutional and popular monarchy, then, when that hope failed, towards a military dictatorship. And this military dictatorship took on more and more the outer form of a Roman imperium divested of Byzantine ceremonial, in his own eyes. By combin-

ing theoretic liberalism with personal talent he thought he could revive ancient Cæsarism.

The true turning point in Napoleon's career came when from his camp at Boulogne, he turned East before learning of Trafalgar, and went off to fight Austria and Prussia. The star he then followed led him inevitably to the blazing streets of Moscow, and finally to utter self-destruction, because every step that he took upon the eastward path depended on his ability to create an atmosphere of overwhelming military prestige, in order to overawe all the monarchs of Europe into accepting him as their equal. In thus turning eastward, Napoleon had to go against his own inmost conviction that he was born to save the Revolution. Had he overcome England's stubborn opposition to change (and there were many people in England half-disposed to pray that he might do so) there would have been nothing against his victorious forward advance but the Atlantic and the new American States, which were unknown quantities in opinion, but which were rapidly dividing into two parties under Washington and Jefferson. But in order to do this, Napoleon would have been obliged to depend on such maritime war genius as his country could bring forth, and since he had no ability or experience in naval war, this decided him. Napoleon must have known that he was not invincible on land

—no general ever is—and yet his attempt to create a European empire depended on his being practically invincible, as he well knew. Hence his alternations of desperate hope and disillusionment, hence the tragic epic, logically insane, of his career.

Whether Napoleon was right or wrong in the course he followed, his idea was destined to dominate Europe throughout the nineteenth century and to survive into the twentieth. With prophetic insight he charted the later course Europe was to follow, and laid the foundations of the personal Cæsarism of Mussolini and his followers, as well as anticipating in his continental system of Confederations, the reverse process that has led to the establishment of a League of Nations. But with European nineteenth century history it is not the purpose of this study to deal, nor even with the outward events of American and Russian history, except insofar as each bears upon, reflects and alters the course of the other. The history of Napoleon is, after all, neatly parallelled by the history of those Israelite kings who, caught between Egypt and the Assyrian empire, were forced to turn first against one and then the other. Our concern here is rather with the two forces beyond Europe's frontier, now at work in Russia and in America; forces that were increasingly to direct the destiny not of Europe alone, but of the world.

BOOK II

"There is an organic logic, an instinctive and dream-sure logic of all existence, as opposed to the logic of the inorganic, the logic of understanding and of things understood—a logic of direction as opposed to a logic of extension."

OSWALD SPENGLER.
"Decline of the West."

"If the cause of the happiness of this country (America) was examined into, it would be found to arise as much from the great plenty of land in proportion to the inhabitants, as from the wisdom of their political institutions."

ALBERT GALLATIN,
in the Congressional Debate
on The Land Bill of 1796.

"Why is it that in Europe those who call themselves Democrats always stand for the people, or at any rate always rely on the people, while our democrat is often an aristocrat, nearly always supports that which oppresses the power of the people, and ends by becoming a despot?

FEODOR DOSTOEVSKY,
commenting on the Pushkin
Address, 1881.

Chapter V

EVERY race and every nation that has ever existed has achieved its destiny only by selecting out of the many paths open to it, one path peculiar to itself and following that, acquiring thereby the singular virtue that is a particularity of that way of life, and of none other. The choice of such a path is never either a deliberate act of will on the part of a few individuals or of the great majority. It is due to the operation of climatic, social, and political factors influencing the capacity and environment of the race itself so that before we can say what any organised body of men can achieve, we have to take into consideration the place where they settle, the sort of work they are best fitted to perform, and the psychological possibilities inherent in the race itself. Thus we can say of the ancient Greeks that their special virtue was a new kind of intellectual agility, due to their position in a rocky and infertile peninsula, as small farmers and shipmen; while to the east and south lay older and more long-settled states which did not share the peculiar strain of adventurous daring and natu-

ral sentiment that the original Dorian settlers possessed. The Romans on the other hand, thanks to their genius for collective action, as well as the necessity that was imposed on them from the outset of conquering and ruling from fortified central hill-towns a more fertile valley-land divided between warring and highly-varied racial stocks, acquired early the virtues of discipline, loyalty, and legalism. The ancient Hebrews, on account of their position as nomads, no less than the constant proximity of the desert, together with the ever-present fear of external conquest, developed into a race of religious seers, prophets, and hard bargainers with the surrounding peoples, who displayed greater resources of material power, but less spiritual resource than they. Thus they acquired the mingled virtues of patience and farseeing desire for justice, and tempered their will to the absolute to a higher degree than either Greeks or Romans. This method of seeing each people not as an abstraction, but a living force, taking and giving colour to its environment, could be applied with equal force to all modern nations.

Until we understand these psychological and ethical differences between nations, and are able to follow them from the highest historical event down to the daily life of the humblest individual, history is no more than a mere recital of names and dates.

Waterloo, Trafalgar, Bunker Hill, Gettysburg, Tsushima and the Somme have no meaning unless we understand that behind every man and gun engaged there move the forces of unseen yet potent essences, swaying the result in their hands, now in one way, now in another. Homer was essentially right, artistically and philosophically, when he made his gods not only take an interest in the fortunes of the Trojan War upon earth, but also ready to take now one side, now the other, in that contest. It is of the nature of humanity to hold fast to that good which it realises to be necessary, in art as in life; and to seek to adjust both art and life to the most obvious reaction to necessity of the single soul, or of the body politic, under the underlying circumstances. Thus ethics and æsthetics are, psychologically speaking, essentially one and the same, and artistic or religious history is written fundamentally for a moral purpose. Even a Gibbon, despite his scepticism, was unable to avoid the moral implications of his theme in writing "The Decline and Fall."

Our problem here is not to settle the sociological differences prevailing among the nations of Europe, but rather to examine the peculiar psychology which has throughout controlled the behaviour of the two great frontier states that at the end of the eighteenth century began to react upon Europe's

destiny, Russia and North America. What we shall have to say about North America here applies also in the same measure to South America, in its interaction upon the Latin-Mediterranean world; but in this respect it was North America that was the teacher, and the Declaration of Independence that the thirteen English-speaking colonies, which later formed the United States, signed in 1776, was followed and copied thereafter throughout the whole extent of both American continents. Both Russia and America, in its most extreme and characteristic national form of the United States, have existed long enough and have maintained, if not their complete independence, at least their aloofness long enough to have acquired psychological characteristics and virtues entirely different from anything that European nations can show us. But if we go to the pages of European historians, or even to European novelists, poets, and philosophers prepared to ask the question: "What is an American, a Russian? In what way do they differ from anything European or from each other?", we by no means obtain a satisfactory answer. The only way we can deal with such a problem is by a direct envisagement first, of all of the countries of Europe itself, in so far as they have common characteristics; and second, of the conditions under which Russia and America came to be what they are.

Europe, psychologically speaking, is a great circle. The lower part of this circle—and since the downfall of Pagan Rome, the less creative, active and pioneering part—is coloured by the older Latin-Mediterranean civilisation, which thanks to its conquest of North Africa was able in antiquity to be the central force in European progress, but which lost this actuality after the seventh century, thanks to the uprise of Islam, and the renewed political power of the Germanic race. During the Middle Ages, the actually dominant force in Europe became the power of the northern half, and this Northern half has been controlled by two forces:—the boundless practical energy of the Teuton, the equally boundless intellectual curiosity of the Celt. If we follow these forces around the circumference of the circle which is Europe, through England, France, Spain, Italy, Austria, Hungary, Poland, Scandinavia, Scotland and Ireland till everywhere the boundaries merge with what is non-European,—be that either Moor or Turk or Lapp or Finn or Firbolg or Basque—we see that each European nation has grown up as a variation on the original Celtic-Teutonic-Latin chord; and that each has precisely what the other lacks, so that they complete each other. But this cannot be said of the great congeries of peoples that inhabit the Russian plain from the

Baltic to the Black Sea. Here the original Slavonic —that is to say largely Scandinavian and East-European element—became overlaid with Tartar racial colour, to such an extent that only the intellectual top stratum, not the sentimental race-basis underneath, remained European. Nor can we define Northern America as fundamentally European, either. Apart from the Spanish influence, which so completely merged itself with the native Red Indian race and atmosphere as to become inseparable from it, we find that in America everywhere the original variations—such as French, Scottish, Scandinavian, English, Irish,—have tended not to remain distinct but to mingle with each other to such an extent that the result is a racial composite, continually becoming more and more flexible, which is solely united by common bonds of language and economic association, not of defined racial instinct. The result is that only the diminishing appeal of old sentimental association, not the fundamental present-day adjustment to the situation, makes the American something akin to the European. In order therefore to understand either America or Russia we have largely to dismiss Europe as a culturally fixed entity from our minds, and plunge into a wilderness of conflicting forces, guided only by the sense of historical movement and by our knowledge of the course that his-

tory has already taken, together with our instinct for soil and scenery and climate. When we arrive at the goals we are seeking, we will perhaps find that our most valuable tools will not after all be the fine pencil of the artist, but the plough of the economist, the axe of the social statistician.

2

The fundamental quality of the American took its origin at the outset from an overwhelming passion for land. The innumerable shiploads of people that have sped westward across the Atlantic from Columbus' first voyage, down to the latest ocean liner, have sought to find land, to achieve land, to settle land, to overrun land, to subdue land. Even the Indian tribes that inhabited that interior before the white man came shared this feeling for land to a considerable extent. Most of them were nomads, practising little agriculture, and incapable of any lasting combination against the whites, because of their incurable habit of appropriating the hunting grounds of their neighbours. The most effective combinations, such as that of the Aztecs in Mexico or the Iroquois in the northwest, were very active despotisms, continually raiding the territory of weaker tribes and holding them to tribute. The whites, on attaining America, as they penetrated

the interior, increasingly tended to drop their European powers of combination and to take on the nomadism and the local jealousies of the savage. One sees this in the eternal quarrels of the Spanish conquistadores over their spoil, no less than in the struggles of the separate colonies that preceded and continued throughout the Revolution, over the development of the western territory. The Revolution itself was less a war to put an end to British oppression than a successful attempt on the part of the colonial landholding aristocracy to attain to an indefinite expansion to the westward without British interference. It was directed by Washington who was himself one of the largest landowners of the period, and whose whole life was motivated by the passion for acquiring new land, notably in the Ohio region. From the Revolution through the Civil War and down to the fantastic scenes of the Florida land boom of a few years ago, the passion for land has been the motive force—one might almost say the virtue—of the great majority of Americans. For land spells to them security, and security means wealth, and wealth leads to power. The American race—if we can speak of such a thing—is a race of land-seizers and land-exploiters. The sinister prominence of the lawyer in American life, even on the frontier, from the beginning, was due to the innumerable wrangles about land-grants

and land-claims. The entire subdual of the American continent by the whites, which took barely fifty years to accomplish, was accompanied by such a waste of the public domain as has been rarely paralleled in history. It is not for nothing that America has been referred to over and over again in the words of its orators and writers as "the land of promise," "land of the Pilgrim's pride," "land of the free and home of the brave," "the land of to-morrow." One meets with something of the same sort for the first time in the glowing accounts of Columbus and the earliest Spanish explorers.

The sensation which inspired these accounts that in America one finds a fabulous and unexplored region of wealth, can still be experienced by almost anyone making a voyage westward across the Atlantic. Owing to the fact that the prevailing winds are westerly and that the Gulf Stream runs east, the journey to this day, even under modern steamer conditions, is frequently more rough and productive of discomfort than the passage from America to Europe. The westward coasts of Europe drop abruptly to the sea in great cliffs; the craggy coast of Cornwall, the sombre cliffs of Ireland, the great headlands of Portugal and Spain. Beyond that, there is nothing but waves and wind—wind always opposing further progress. And America does not make its presence known,

until just before one reaches it. Two days before New York one encounters the Gulf Stream, that strange region of low-lying clouds, of heavy rain squalls, of intensely dark blue seas lifting and falling under crowns of heavy white foam. These seas are weedy, and the gulls become more frequent here, so that the whole has an effect of being a No Man's Land of fantasy, a world before the creation gave bounds to chaos, a region where nothing is living except the ship. Then one comes out of the Gulf Stream into greyer, shoal water. All the rest of the way lies through shoals—long stretches of the sea more often shrouded in fog than shaken by storms, flat, unstirring, that invite one ever further and further onward. Europe is cut off, once and for all. The land—the unknown land—is taking possession of us. And the first thing one sees of this strange unknown region beyond Europe is a long empty sandbank, inviting one further still.

On the other hand, in travelling towards Russia, one has the impression that the land itself, like the ocean on the trans-Atlantic voyage, will never really come to an end. Long before one has finished rolling over the monotonous Polish plain, Europe is left behind. The endless distances, the sombre pine woods, the starveling villages, the scraggy fields, simply succeed one the other. Before such a landscape one has the fear of being cut off—of not being

able ever to return to habitable scenes. Napoleon must have faced such a feeling when he hesitated on almost every stage of his journey to Moscow before going on; and even when one has gone on and crossed the frontier, the plain is still the same, the desolation and loneliness are only a little more intense. There is no Russia, nothing but a frightful distance of wilderness left behind which we must recross in order to find the social compactness of Europe. One is sick of land, sick of these endless horizons long before reaching Moscow, where at last one finds Russia. And when one reaches Russia at last, the mysterious face of the country is hidden behind the red walls of the Kremlin.

The passion for land then which made America what it is, is not the same passion that has made Russia what it is. Before the monotony of Russia the educated Russian shrugs his shoulders, the uneducated peasant spits. There is nothing here of the enthusiasm with which each American tells you excitedly that his is "God's own country." Nothing at all. The Russian is far more likely to assure you that his is "a dark people" living in "an unhappy country." The passion that moves the Russian is at bottom something equally simple, and explicable, as the passion that moves the American. It has different psychological roots, and a different manifestation in form. But it isolates itself just as com-

pletely from Europe as the American identification of land and prosperity.

The Russian craves for power. This is comprehensible when one understands that Russia, with her enormous population, lay helpless and powerless under the Tartar invasion from the twelfth century till the sixteenth, when Ivan the Great and his successor, Ivan the Terrible, took the first steps towards independence, and consolidation. And even after that time, long after Russia had become a unified whole under the sole sway of Moscow, there were very few with power sufficient to keep this unity together. This is the true significance of the "time of troubles" that followed Ivan the Terrible's end. His remaining legitimate son, a minor, was mentally incapable of rule; the choice of the leading nobles, Boris Godunov, was strong and capable, but could not prevail against the idea —rooted in the hearts of the people—that the power of the Czar should descend in unbroken succession from one anointed sovereign to the other. It was easy for a perfectly obscure man to impersonate the legitimate heir (who was actually dead), obtain Polish support, and finally by bargaining with the other nobles, who were jealous of Boris, make himself Czar. The subsequent history of the next twenty years reads like a nightmare. A succession of pretenders to the throne uprose, in each

case giving out that they were sons, legitimate or illegitimate, of Ivan; and anarchy and disruption grew so rapidly that in the end in Moscow itself the nobles took two sides, now upholding one party, now the other. Only the intervention of the Church itself—at that time and for long later revered by the peasant and noble alike as being the one source of supernatural and united power,—saved the country's independence, and allowed the Romanov line to ascend the throne. The same troubles broke out after Peter the Great's reign. Having put his only legitimate heir to death, Peter announced that on each successive Czar after his time devolved the duty of naming his own successor. But he himself died before he did so. The result was a fresh series of impersonations, and more disorder, which rose to a climax in Catherine's reign, in the peasant rebellion of Pugachev, a Cossack, who gave out that he was the legitimate Czar, the husband murdered by Catherine's orders, and moreover gave names of well-known courtiers to his peasant officers.

Thus, for over two centuries and a half, from the time when Ivan the Great assumed the title of Czar of all the Russias at Moscow, down to the time of Peter the Great, the idea had grown and spread in the Russian mind that security, order, life and happiness itself were dependent on the

maintenance of power. This power was spiritual in its essence; power to command and to be able to enforce one's command. That explains why successive pretenders to the throne, after Peter the Great's time, were at pains to have their cause blessed by some prominent prelate of the "Old Believers," the anti-reform party which Peter himself had driven from the official Church, and which still persisted despite his edicts. It also explains why in every Russian house, before the Revolution, there was always to be found a shelf containing icons. It is not that the Russian is more superstitious than other people. It is simply because the saints are above all miracle-workers. They have, it is felt, supernatural powers. They and they alone can protect the sacred centre of the hearth from external disorder. After the Revolution, when the saints were shown to be powerless, the icons were taken down, and portraits of Lenin took their place. The Russian, whether peasant or noble, reactionary or revolutionary, seeks above all to command respect—and only the man with unlimited power can do this, in his eyes. The hero of Dostoevsky's "Memoirs from the Underground" is illuminating in this respect. He is ready to reject the offer of any Utopia, unless he is given the liberty of "putting out his tongue at it," and prefers to live in a

hencoop instead. The American would make no such mistake. He would live loyally in the Utopia or the hencoop provided he were given a million dollars or its equivalent in steel-works, oil or water power leases.

It may perhaps be argued that the American of the present day has not the same passion for land-exploitation that his forbears had, but is apt, as in the above example, to lay stress on the importance of making money, of doing "big business." This, however, is due less to any transformation of his original impulse than to the prevailing effect of the industrial system. Stocks, bonds, and factories have simply become substitutes for the broad acres of undeveloped fertility that his forefathers knew. Despite them, few Americans continue to live in the homes that their ancestors built. They are migrants, seeking something else. What they seek is a place where they can really feel at home, and this they cannot find without liberty and prosperity. Of that liberty and prosperity an individual domain is the actual symbol. It is not for nothing that so many wealthy Americans acquire old estates in Europe. Here they can for the first time feel that they are part of a settled land-tradition. They belong somewhere; they have a home, not simply a piece of soil only differentiated from the surround-

ing prairie by having a house on it. They are henceforth free to indulge their passion for possession to the utmost.

Power, then, means land, wealth, possessions to the American: to the Russian it means simply absolute and arbitrary freedom to do as he pleases. That is the psychological attitude that rules over the average man in both cases. The average American believes himself to be a product of "God's own country" and only seeks an opportunity to prove it; the average Russian believes himself accursed by fate and thwarted by life, but is determined to make others respect his arbitrary whim. And the intellectuals only differ from the average by the degree to which they pursue these aims. It is impossible to show fully how this is so without anticipating matter that, properly speaking, belongs to another section of this study. We may however take two important and highly illuminating examples to illustrate our thesis.

3

Let us take the case of the completely uprooted Russian and the completely uprooted American. In such a case, if the obsession of the two minds were towards power and land as we have just stated, we should normally expect this obsession to

be even more evident than it is in the case of the stay-at-homes. The nineteenth century provided two notable examples of this type, in the cases of Turgenev and Henry James. Here were two men of high intelligence and artistic capacity who spent their lives out of their respective countries. Since they were nearly contemporaries (though Turgenev was the elder) and moneyed men to boot, they practically came under the influence of the same type and period of European civilisation; and there is also a close kinship in their art, Turgenev having spent his life in refining upon the lyrical realism of Gogol, while Henry James spent his in refining upon the psychological realism of Hawthorne. Yet if we examine their careers there is nothing that presents a greater contrast.

The motive that guided Henry James was a search for a fatherland. He sought deliberately to build himself into the scheme of social relationships offered him by the country of his choice, which was England. In order to satisfy this passion for possessing a country, he set himself the task of assimilating the past of England, of which he knew little, and forgetting the past of America, of which he knew much. The result was that he fell into a cosmopolitanism which was neither English nor American; which was intensely artificial since it was the result not of the working of social, moral or re-

ligious factors, but of an æsthetic parasitism. Since James was a highly conscientious artist, he could not help making the most of this material, but its indecisiveness, its detachment from the cruder but more essential issues of life gradually sapped the source of the power with which he presented it. Even the common kinship of language which had perhaps chiefly appealed to him in taking up his residence in England, became a treacherous double-edged weapon, to be handled gingerly, rather than as an ally in this struggle. It has been said that Thomas Hardy once remarked sardonically that Henry James when he wrote about Washington Square wrote well, but that when he wrote about England, "did not know the difference between a rectory and a parish." James himself probably felt this, and it explains his increasing apologeticalness, his increasing love of qualification, which makes his later style so much of a painful maze and puzzle. In the search for a country—a country that could never be totally his and yet must be made his—he sacrificed everything: vigour and directness, independence of judgment, breadth of vision, even his own life. The desire to become part of England became the ruling passion of Henry James' life; it became so engrossing as to wipe out of his mind all earthly love affairs, and to assume the proportions of a grand passion, pursued with

the ardor of a specialist. He attained his end, but only to die.

Turgenev did not go in this direction; he renewed by visits his own sense of the physical appearance, the psychological reality of Russia. But he sought just as persistently for some power greater than Russia to which he might give himself. Ardently believing in freedom, liberal in mind and in politics, he spent most of his life in revolt against the crudeness and crassness of the Russian world he had known; nor was he able to accept at its face value what the European State was ready to put into its place, as his pamphlet, "The Execution of Troppmann" bears witness. The only power, it seemed to him, was in the detached individual; and this drew the aristocratic landowner Turgenev towards the nihilists and the anarchists. He was the first to draw the portrait of a nihilist in his novel, "Fathers and Sons." This conclusion too with its unsentimental realism, shocked Turgenev's own conscience; with the result that he became the great portrayer of indecisive souls, of "superfluous men," of hesitating, Hamlet-like, impotent characters to be found in the whole range of Russian literature. His complete erotic enslavement to the singer, Pauline Viardot, only increased this tendency. Here was a power that at least was greater than his. In his old age, in the "Dream-Tales" and "Poems

in Prose," Turgenev became a confirmed pessimist, feeling that all power lay totally beyond man's grasp, in the divine indifference of nature and fate. Shortly after a final visit to Russia, during which he was applauded by the cosmopolitan literary salons, with their sentimental liberalism, but critically attacked by the most powerful Russian writers of his own generation, Turgenev died.

There are other points of parallelism between these two remarkable figures; such, for example, as the curious preference both displayed for female characters. But enough has been said to show that the power-land antithesis, which is here set down as the key to the Russian and American character persists even in the most refined, uprooted and highly subtle specimens of the race. If it persists in these, what must its strength be in the most native and elemental specimens? To find this question answered, the reader must turn to a later section of this study, where the antithesis will be more fully discussed in the works of Tolstoy and Whitman, Melville and Dostoevsky. Meanwhile it is sufficient to note once again that this antithesis is, in fact, a likeness. What the American and the Russian both seek is essentially freedom to do what they like—the freedom of which the American Jefferson wrote when he said the human being

mostly wants to be let alone. The Russian seeks this freedom by means of attempting to despotically impose himself upon others; the American by means of acquiring the wealth or the estate that will enable him to set himself apart from his neighbours. The outer means only are different; the tendencies in their inner nature are essentially the same, springing as they do from an inner revolt against the modified "freedom in restraint" discovered and practised in Europe.

4

Before quitting this side of our subject it may be worth while to discuss one of the most notable examples of a revolter against this European "freedom in restraint" which America has produced. I refer not to Whitman, who indeed is an extreme though later and more logical example, but to Emerson. For Emerson was the pioneer in the path that Thoreau and Whitman later followed, and the more scholarly bent of his mind, together with the philosophical tinge he was able to throw over his doctrine, make of him a figure of supreme importance in American literature. There is no parallel to Emerson in Russian literature, no such single figure as he to paradoxically span the whole

field of thought and give tone and direction to all that followed. For as he was on the one side pantheist mystic, upholding a contemplative ideal very different from the feverish pioneer effort on every side about him, so he was on the other side equally practical Yankee, foreshadowing the "practical truth" of the Pragmatists, and preferring activity to thought.

The basis of his doctrine might be described in these words from the longer of his two essays on "Nature": "Why should not we also enjoy an original relation to the universe? Why should we not have a poetry and philosophy out of insight, not of tradition, and a religion by revelation to us? . . . The sun shines to-day also. There is more wool and flax in the fields. There are new lands, new men, new thoughts. Let us demand our own works and laws and worship."

It must be noted that these "works and laws and worship" were all to be derived afresh from nature by the Americans who—by the simple accident of transporting themselves into a new and undeveloped country—were suddenly going to find them out for themselves, without external help from the past. Emerson's own attitude towards the past is highly paradoxical. In one breath, he admits that the past contains much that is of value: Plato, and

Jesus and other "representative men." But in the next, he repudiates utterly the lesson of the past and declares the measure of history to be the ordinary man. Why? Because the Americans were individualist pioneers, and far from toning down their individualism, Emerson would make it still more acute. His chief ethical doctrine is self-reliance to the uttermost. And self-reliance to him meant in reality reliance on nature and external brute fact, as it must in every pioneer and rapidly-developing community. In other words, Emerson's theory logically meant that the backwoodsman was equally if not more important to the scheme of things than the sage, the poet, and the scholar. It is true that Emerson tried to save his own position as one of the best read men in America, by positing in everyone's breast a vague, mystical, and rather woolly "oversoul," which at its appropriate time and place would bend down and whisper in the vulgarest being's ear how much akin he was to Socrates or Marcus Aurelius. But this check on his favourite self-reliance is altogether the weakest and least important part of Emerson's teaching and for its obscurantism deserves to be ranked along with the infantile mystery mongering of American pseudo-oriental cults and secret societies.

In his soberer moments, Emerson did indeed

realize that there were two laws abroad in this world: the "law for man and the law for thing" and that while the "law for thing" had much the best of it, in practical affairs, it was destructive of human worth and dignity in the long run. But unfortunately, he never decided in his own mind whether to give his support to human dignity, or to the "law for thing" which was having its own way in the America of which he wrote. So he salved his conscience by supposing that nature would help his fellow-countrymen to find their own laws. But so far as nature is concerned, man is probably of less importance, certainly of far less permanence, than the tree that stands in the midst of the field and sucks its life strength directly from the bosom of the earth and the oceanic vastness of the air. But man comes and cuts down the tree to build himself a cabin, and when he has built it makes a law of a sort which nature never knew, to the effect that no one who crosses its threshold shall ever come armed to kill him, and that the woman who sleeps with him on its wolf-pelt bed for one night shall remain to serve him and his needs both night and day. That is the law for the man, and it goes on, whether the wind that rocked the tree, lays flat the cabin, or the earth that suckled it swallows it up. Yet Emerson fondly supposed that some wonderful

new law could be made by simply transporting man out of a peasant's cottage that had stood for centuries in Europe, and giving him a log hut in the wilderness. He flattered the vanity of the Americans, by telling them that their prosperous growth would not only develop the body but the soul. It was a false theory, doing incalculable harm.

Emerson's philosophy was entirely a philosophy for pioneers and with the vanishing of the pioneer type its influence and the influence of the vague mystical land-hunger of the frontier—that marvellous realm where wonderful things were always to be done, but never accomplished—began to diminish in American life. Yet with its insistence on individual self-reliance and on possession, Emerson struck the keynote of the American philosophy of to-day with its "go-getter" shrewdness, its refrain of "getting as much as you can and giving as little as you can," its assumption of superiority based on individual cunning, its vague and pernicious subsidiary hankering for what is mysterious and occult and esoteric, whereby its crudeness is leavened. All this America owes to one man, to Emerson, and it is obvious that we must forgive this man the enormous damage he did by recollecting continually, how just before his day, America had passed through the most inchoate period of her national

development, a period of democratic chaos, out of which neither an intelligent institution nor an organized political state could have evolved had it not been for the conservative moneyed classes. Let us also remember that Emerson, in his private capacity, loved chiefly to appear as a scholar, in order to distinguish himself from the community; much as Tolstoy, in his desire to set himself apart, loved to pose as a peasant and wear birch-bark shoes.

Chapter VI

NOTHING is more illuminating of the contrasted power-land psychology prevailing in Russia and America than the attitude taken up by both nations in regard to the difficult and insistent problem of the Jews. Since the beginning of Christianity, the Jews have been both powerless and landless; whether in their dispersal they have aimed at reattaining power or at reattaining land is a question that at first sight seems almost impossible to answer. A certain amount of knowledge of Jewish social conditions is necessary before we can even begin to find the reply. The great Dispersal, following upon the fall of Jerusalem, led the rabbis who thereby became in fact as well as in theory, the heads of the people, to concentrate the attention of their fellow-religionists on one point; a thorough understanding and detailed obedience to the Law. The compilation of the Talmud, that strange heterogeneous commentary, was the immediate result. As regards the possession of land, all hopes that the Jew might have in that respect were relegated to the distant future, when the Holy Land, by some

miracle, would be restored to him. The teaching of the rabbis was, that to maintain his status as a Jew, every member of the community must, above all, observe the law in the minutest particulars; beyond this, he could hold any political creed he liked. Jehovah would restore Zion to him in due time without his making an effort to attain it.

The later development of Judaism has in the main followed out this principle. Zionism as a political faith has never been highly popular amongst better-class Jews, and may be said to appeal mostly to those who are least patient of the moral and intellectual despotism forged by the rabbi-class throughout the Middle Ages to maintain their order. Zionism often goes hand in hand with dangerously unorthodox political and religious theory. It appeals more to the Chassid mystic, than to the orthodox rationalist. The Jews who survived the Dispersal and the early persecutions of the Romans, tended continually to become more and more members of large city populations, handcraftsmen, traders, or bankers, on the eve of the Middle Ages. During that period, the process of making the Jews a parasitic, financial class, was accelerated. The one trade that the Middle Ages left to them was that of jeweller or money-lender. Progressive persecution, the need to keep all wealth in movable form, the eternal migration from one

country to another, more and more concentrated the mind of the race on movable capital as a source of power. Except for a few Ghettos, contemptuously permitted, the Jew had no land.

The history of the Jews in Russia properly begins with Catherine's partition of Poland and the consequent establishment of the Pale of Settlement in 1791. From that time on it has been a tale of uninterrupted oppression and persecution. This oppression and persecution was carried to fantastic lengths not only by the Czars themselves but still more by their subjects. Pogroms were openly applied to the unfortunate Jews by successive governments under Alexander III and Nicholas II. It is now generally admitted that these attacks were carried out by the armed population, with the open connivance and aid of police officers. The military authorities in many cases unsuccessfully protested against the inflammatory pamphlets, underground propaganda, and other methods employed by the police and the Ministry of the Interior to bring these massacres about. Pogroms were, therefore, though encouraged from above, unmistakably mob-movements and as such, in the overcrowded Jewish Pale, highly popular. They corresponded to something essential in the character of the Russian people themselves—an intense hatred and suspicion of the Jew, combined with a

desire to seek a scapegoat for intolerable conditions of taxation and oppression.*

This suspicion arose undoubtedly through fear of the power the Jewish race might possess if allowed to live and flourish in impunity. The talk of "ritual murder" which motivated many pogroms was but a symptom of this underlying belief common to the illiterate Russian masses that the Jew had some hypnotic magic ability that set him apart from other men. The fact that the Jews were highly literate, that they frequently adopted the profession of doctors, money-lenders, or something analogous—requiring brain work—struck the Russian peasant as peculiar. His favourite receptacle of mystic power was the orthodox Church, and above the Church the Czar, whom the Church alone could sanctify. The Jew rejected the Church; in consequence, the Czar had confined him in the Pale, and by successive edicts, forbidden him even to attend the universities and obtain an education. The reason must be that the Jew had some power greater than the Czar, the church, and even God. He must be in fact, an ally of Satan. The pogrom followed as a matter of course, and the most intense nationalism became allied with the most rabid anti-Semitism.

* The threat of pogroms has by no means disappeared under the Bolsheviks. See Luc Durtain's "L'Autre Europe" for details.

When the régime of the Czars collapsed in the Revolution of 1917, and the Bolsheviks came into power, it was noted by many that among these Bolsheviks were several that were Jews. That Lenin himself was a Jew—adopted by a family of provincial nobles to take the place of a son lost in infancy—became one of the legends soon spread by enemies of the new régime. There was however no evidence of this, and the Jewish members of the new political party into whose hands Russia fell, were not less hostile to Judaism in the orthodox sense than to any other religion. And this naturally so, for the rabbis had again and again insisted that only God Himself had the power and the ability to deliver His people, and restore their sway. The later development of the Bolshevik revolution has shown once again that the Russian people have an instinctive hostility to everything Jewish in tone. The Jewish members of the Soviet Council have been progressively eliminated, or passed over; so that in Russia to-day the influence of Jewish ideas is less than it ever was. Even Marx, whose theories gave Lenin his impetus, is considered to-day less important than Lenin; and there is growing an increased cult for Darwin and Ford rather than Marx within the bosom of the Bolshevik party. The Bolshevik movement has been in its essence, the development of an heretical religious faith, based on the creed of Western nat-

uralism and utilitarianism of the Darwin-Herbert Spencer type. As such it is equally hostile to orthodox Christianity or to orthodox Judaism.

2

The attitude of the American colonies towards the Jewish emigrants who came to them was the very reverse of this. From the first settlements of Jews in Newport, Charleston, Savannah, New York, these exiles were allowed to take positions of honor and affluence. There has never been a Ghetto in American life, and the only Ghettos that exist have been created fairly recently by housing conditions and by the overcrowding of some of the great Eastern cities. The Jews were among the most prominent supporters of the American Revolution itself; and there is irony as well as illumination in the fact that the one man who may be said with truth to have founded the Federal Union, Alexander Hamilton, was possibly half a Jew.* The fact that America supplied a land of promise to the Jew, from the days when Cromwell first tried toleration down to the present, has been tacitly admitted by the increasing tide of Jewish emigration that has gone on from 1660 down to the present day.

* His mother's name was Rachel Levine. His father is unknown. Mrs. Levine might have been a Christian married in a Jewish family but the name of Rachel is not common among Christians.

The one thing that has possibly restrained it has been the fact that the Jews are no longer fitted for an agricultural life, but are apt to become members of those large-town mobs which Jefferson and the other founders of the Republic so profoundly hated, and which now represent so large a proportion of American society. A few attempts were made by the colonies at the beginning to keep the franchise from the Jews; but apart from that fact, there has been no organised opposition to Jewish influence on the part of any class of the community down to the close of the Great War.

The result is that the Jews, indifferent to land, have concentrated more and more on the element which the early American neglected: the element of power. The uprise of the Jewish power in America took place during the great change from agricultural to industrial life that coincided with the Civil War and which developed into the famous "gilded age" of the seventies. During that period the Jewish community in the New World split into two classes. The upper class became those who, through the power conferred on them by wealth, grew more and more closely allied to the dominent financier class, and became thereby more and more closely American, abandoning the two qualities that had made them specifically Jewish: the intense particularism of their creed which had made them con-

sider themselves a race set apart by God, and the not less intense determination to remain a separate nation though exiled and scattered among other nations. The lower class, increasing at a great rate after 1880, when Alexander III began his long reign of oppression in Russia, brought with them to America nothing but an ingrown determination to stay what they were: and it is only among them that anywhere in America to-day one can find that "mystic quality" that in the words of Waldo Frank, makes the Jew what he is, and which once lost, destroys his Judaism.

The Reform Movement in Judaism, as a double attack on the intolerant particularism of the Jewish faith as the one faith blessed by God, and on the sentiment of Jewish nationalism alike, owes its success entirely to the support given by American rabbis in 1885. The greater part of the wealth of the American Jewish community has gone to the support of Reform Judaism. That this form of the Jewish faith is merely a transition stage, and unsatisfying after all to the human desire to live within the ordered limits of an absolute faith, which the Jews have felt perhaps more profoundly than any other people, is shown by the drift of many intelligent and unworldly-minded adherents of reformed Jews out of their faith into Christian Science, theosophy, or any one of the dozens of fantastic cults that

flourish in America. The only thing that Reform Judaism has given the American Jew is a feeling that his forefathers were on the wrong track, not that he is on the right one. When his faith becomes merely a local peculiarity, to be tolerated as any other local peculiarity is tolerated, and no longer *the* faith, sole, absolute, and eternal; when his citizenship becomes not a question of kingship in Zion but of possessing a vote and paying taxes to the latest corrupt political gang that happens to be governing America, then the Jew is alike homeless and rudderless, an atom in the modern chaos. He has no longer unified personality nor spiritual power of any kind. He is only a cog in an immense machine that does not move in any direction, but which simply goes around and around, grinding human lives and hopes to dust in the process.

The paradox of American Judaism is that America, by liberating the Jew, has completely destroyed him. The paradox of Russian Judaism is that Russia by oppressing the Jew, has only intensified his original character. Zionism appeals to the Russian Jew mainly, and it is largely through the support of Russian Jewish colonisation that Zionism is now being tried out in Palestine. The Russian Jew in poverty has kept his legends, his folk poetry, his contact with a mystic patrimony given him by Moses. Moreover, the Russian revolution, with its

consequent liberation of the Jew from the old constraint, has enriched Russian literature with a new strain of Jewish genius, reflected alike in such works as Ansky's "Dybbuk" and Babel's "Horse Army." The American Jew on the other hand, to the degree that he becomes more wealthy and powerful, becomes less intellectual, and usually pretends to despise his own people. One finds dozens of Americans who quite obviously are racially of the Semitic type, and who socially and religiously are at but one remove from the faith of the Ghetto, ready to assert their anti-Semitism. And even among those who still retain some vestiges of respect for the attitude of their forefathers, one finds an increasing disposition to mingle in the ranks of Gentile society, and to handle facetiously the topic of their own race and religion, as if it represented only a passing craze of the remote past, which they have fortunately outgrown. As regards imagination, they tend increasingly to respect the shibboleths of American business life.

3

The attitude of the average American, the "one hundred per center" of the middle west and the industrial east, who is and must remain the backbone of America culturally and socially, towards the

Jewish phenomenon, has considerably varied during the most recent years. To this average individual nothing has mattered since the Civil War, so long as the country remained prosperous. So long as his land bore "bumper crops," capable of being sold at high prices, so long as the "melting pot," by laying the stress on the Jew's adaptability, went on functioning properly, and transforming mediæval mystics and fanatics into modern business men, all was well; no thinking about the future was necessary. It is natural to the American temperament—a "free soil" temperament long before Lincoln's day—having linked up land and liberty as it has done, not to wish to worry about the future, not to do any more thinking than is absolutely necessary. Thinking is indeed dangerous. It may lead to a suspicion that the Revolution was a mistake and that the Constitution was only a new form of tyranny. America's awakening in this respect to a whole world of intimate problems that she must settle, came for the most part, only after President Wilson told his people that they must enter the World War. And then America suddenly realised that the Jews had a great deal of power as well as a great deal of cleverness, and were likely to use both for ends that were far from being "one hundred per cent" American.

The resultant wave of anti-Semitism that swept the United States was something practically unique in American history. There had been before outbreaks of anti-Jewish feeling, notably in some of the Southern States, but nothing of this nation-wide character. From mob-outrages engineered by the revived Ku Klux Klan to the declaration of lofty Harvard University that it proposed to limit the number of Jewish students, the campaign of hatred swept the country for a few months, and then dissolved in a gale of laughter. It represented nothing fundamental to the American character and temperament. It undoubtedly arose from a feeling of suspicion that the cunning Jew might intellectually be opposed to the American Constitution, which is considered as the sacrosanct basis of American faith, much as the Egyptian "Book of the Dead" was considered the sacrosanct basis of Egyptian faith. Moreover, the Jew might secretly be in sympathy with some of the dangerous anarchistic or other radical doctrines that had recently come into such prominence, thanks to America's deep-rooted and insuperable objection to the war. The coming and passing of this momentary wave of anti-Semitic sentiment coincided curiously in date and duration with the period during which Russia, having cast off her old values and not yet settled in her new

ones, elevated many Jews, who happened to be members of the victorious Communist party, to power.

4

The case is quite different when we come to the Catholics. Successive Russian sovereigns from Catherine the Great who offered asylum to the expelled Jesuits, down to the present day have shown partiality to the Catholic faith; and to this day the Bolsheviks, in their war on religion, have left the Catholic church largely undisturbed, hoping perhaps to gain recruits to atheism out of the conflict between the rival sects of Catholic and Orthodox.* This toleration of Catholicism was formerly partly due to the fact that in Poland and Livonia, the Czar ruled over thousands of Catholics; partly to the law that forbade anyone born in the Orthodox faith to become a convert, on penalty of exile and loss of estate. But in America a passionately intolerant anti-Catholic feeling has existed since, at least, the New England Colonies opposed James II and his nominee, Andros, and has known numerous revivals since the "Native American" movement began opposing the extension of the franchise to the Irish immigrant back in the thirties.

* This statement may perhaps be questioned by some Catholics. Apparently, Catholics are not allowed to undertake missionary activity in Russia. But the church cult has not been suppressed.

Economically and socially it has persisted, and even spread from New England to the south and west. This anti-Catholic feeling provides the basic strength of the recent post-war revival of the Ku Klux Klan. And during the period while this book was being written, its strength was again successfully tested in an important presidential contest.

The fundamental American feeling about Catholicism is that it forms, politically an *imperium in imperio;* that by its insistence on parochial schools, instead of the usual public schools, by its establishment of convents, monasteries, church-owned foundations, everywhere, it becomes an extra-political power, secret in its methods, ready to invade the United States from within and seize the better part of her domain. This belief (whether it has any foundation in fact or not is not material to this inquiry) has been largely strengthened by the extraordinary solidarity of the Catholic communities in the industrial regions, composed as they are, mainly of toiling foreigners; and by the redoubtable power of ecclesiasticisms further southward, in Mexico. Whether this feeling about the Catholic church is destined to disappear—now that Mexico has an anti-clerical government, and even the Vatican itself has taken on a Republican tone—is, for the moment, uncertain; but there is no possibility of writing an intelligent history of America

without reference to its existence. A profound distrust of Catholicism as a secret body subversive of Americanism has again and again shown itself to be a mainspring of American middle-class action. It explains a very great deal that is highly popular in America, from the flourishing condition of freemasonry and other semi-secret societies, down to the zeal for closing the saloons, which were favourite meeting places for that purely Irish and Catholic creation, the ward politicians. Now and again, as in the "Native American" movement above mentioned, the later "Know-Nothing" movement, the cry "Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion," the revived Ku Klux Klan, the opposition to Governor Smith, it shows itself openly in the field of political life.

The complete reason for the toleration of Catholicism under Czar and Bolshevik alike, in Russia, in the very heart of a community that in numbers at least has been openly the chief rampart of Eastern Orthodoxy for centuries, and for the mistrust of the same faith shown in America, despite the fact that America can boast of a large percentage of Catholics, can only be discovered by examining more fully the underlying attitude of the Russian and the American to all religion. It suffices to say here that, to the American, Republicanism, that is to say the liberty gained by local prosperity and by complete ownership of one's own property, is more

important than any other form of religion; while under successive Russian governments, Autocracy, rooted in communal feeling, and in unworldly faith, has since the time of Peter the Great at least, directed religion towards the ends it proposed for itself. It is the considered opinion of most intelligent observers that the Bolshevik government, in this respect, has acted precisely as the governments that preceded it. It has warped religion to its own ends; or, rather, it has created an altogether new religion out of a few phrases of Marx and the life and example of Lenin. It is a mummified body—Lenin from his mausoleum in the Red Square—that rules Russia to-day. After all, did he not wear a peasant's cap, and did he not order electric light to be extended to every village, besides giving the common workman bread, peace, and liberty? The cult of Lenin as a new saint, or rather as a new Messiah, has some curious sides. But the most curious side of all is to note how little distinguishes this figure from the celebrated figure of Christ wandering as "a serf throughout the Russian land, blessing it," that so much inspired the early Slavophils. Meantime the Central Presidium of the Soviet—the new Autocrats of Russia—having achieved this version of Orthodoxy, uses its power to persecute successfully the followers of every former religion.

Chapter VII

THERE is a certain obvious parallel between religion in North America and religion in Russia, because both countries are, and have been, for centuries, fundamentally Christian. Yet the dissimilarities on the face of it, are so manifest that it might seem to a visitor from another planet that the religious life of the two countries sprang from sources as opposed as the religion, let us say, of Ancient Egypt and Ancient Assyria. What American Christianity accepts, Russian Christianity rejects, and vice versa.

In both lands, Christianity came from without, and was an entirely foreign creed to the animism practised by the natives before its advent. But where American Christianity emerged from what has been called Protestantism, that is to say the right of the individual to decide on questions of faith for himself, Russian religion came from the Orthodoxy of the Byzantine church, with its submission of the individual intelligence to a super-personal, wonder-working power transmitted by consecration from patriarch to patriarch. The differences in

form and outward observance all spring from an inner difference in psychological attitude. To the American, the soul of the individual believer is alone important, and his salvation is the one desirable aim; to the Russian the communion of believers is alone important, and the individual soul only retains his hold on salvation by virtue of his complete adherence and loyalty to it. Consequently in America, religion exalts the moral standard of the individual good life; in Russia it upholds the spiritual standard of the communal believing life. The one exalts conduct, the other faith.

It has not escaped the notice of shrewd historians that the American makes a constant attempt to prove that his great men were intensely moral and respectable in character. Washington is exalted above Jefferson on the basis of a few legends like that of the cherry tree or the other story, not less unhistorical, to the effect that the great Revolutionary leader prayed at Valley Forge. Paine, who by his inspired polemic probably did more to precipitate the Revolution than any other publicist of the time, is tacitly ignored as being "a dirty little atheist." Recently, attempts have been made to show that Lincoln was exaltedly religious; attempts that rest on exceedingly flimsy foundations. And if Woodrow Wilson maintains any favour in America, it will be rather because of his unbending Presbyte-

rianism than because of his eminent ability as a statesman. It is because Roosevelt, his great rival, upheld the motto of "Fear God and take your own part" and led the life of the normal husband and father, that he is immensely popular among millions of his fellow-countrymen to-day.

The Russians go to the exactly opposite extreme. Their heroes are precisely those whose lives were heroic examples of disregard of moral conduct. Ivan the Terrible, blood-soaked, sensual, and incapable of achieving any faith beyond the basest superstition; Peter the Great, mocking the church-ceremonies with drunken parody, making and unmaking patriarchs, the accursed Antichrist of the Old Believers; Pugachev, the outlaw who despoiled nobles and monasteries alike; Tolstoy, the great heretic and excommunicate, such are the sort of men Russia unconsciously honours. Against them the Church can put nothing in the field but a handful of monks and thaumaturgists.

That morals can be separated from faith has been consistently denied throughout the history of European Christianity, by some of the most intelligent men that European Christianity has produced. Whether this denial is valid or not, there can be no doubt that Nature in itself is morally indifferent, just as it is æsthetically indifferent One can, unfortunately, believe in life without believing in any

specific moral code; and the result is that what we call Christianity has been divided into warring sects, those that exalt the observance of the feasts and sacraments prescribed by the Church above moral discipline, and those that exalt the achievement of lofty moral character above all feasts and ceremonies. The former in the main, is the way taken by Russia; the latter the way taken by America. In Russia one asks first whether so-and-so is a believer or an atheist; in America whether so-and-so is or is not "a good man."

2

Every religious system (not excluding polytheism) defines Godhead now in terms of outward nature, now in terms of man's own inner comprehension of himself. Religion is the meeting-place of objective fact and subjective psychology; it is therefore the most comprehensive and at the same time the least definable of all human activities. Until we understand this fact we are in the position of a great many nineteenth century free-thinkers, who for the life of them could not understand why people should want to make such a pother about religion when they could build factories instead of cathedrals, and amass worldly wealth instead of seeking for the kingdom of heaven. To such peo-

ple, religion in itself seemed too childish and unprogressive to be considered important. As a matter of fact, it was precisely these nineteenth century materialists and unbelievers who were childish in their faith in human progress, as the Great War proved.

Religion, in its most complete sense, might almost be defined as the "most complex and mature attitude it is possible to take towards reality." This attitude comes from a fusion of all our faculties: animal as well as intellectual, moral as well as æsthetic, individual as well as social; organised on the plane of the individual will. This fusion combines the boundless and at bottom irrational faith in life that must guide us if we are to live at all, with the limited and rational faith in a common moral code of conduct. It is because of this combination of opposites that religion exists in some measure, even among the irreligious; while the most highly religious being only achieves it imperfectly. It attempts to reconcile both the absolute and the relative, the single individual's relation to the infinite, with man's whole relation to society.

From such a standpoint, both Russia and America have been incompletely religious. In the one case, religion has relied altogether on its thaumaturgic power over nature. One gets an impression, from reading much Russian history, that the whole

people have spent most of their lives for centuries in making pilgrimages, praying to icons, visiting monasteries, crying "Christ is risen!" on each successive Easter Day, despite the fact they were living all the time in inimitable dirt, disorder, oppression, and misery. Russian literature, being, for the most part, an intellectual revolt against the pre-intellectual instinct that dictated these practices, and aiming also for the most part at a source of power that is far beyond the grasp of religious semi-magic ritual, has largely disregarded these plain obvious facts, but they remain in history. When we read that in Catherine the Great's day, the Moscow mob raised riots because the government proposed to remove from its place a celebrated wonder-working image of the Madonna,* at the foot of which the people were dying of cholera in heaps; when we read that, in the revolution of 1905, one of the heroes was Father Gapon who led the starving and striking mob into the square before the Winter Palace, and bade them kneel there, where they were promptly shot down by the Czar's troops (it later transpired that Father Gapon was an *agent provocateur* in government employment); when we read of the enormous prestige of Rasputin, then we realise that to every Russian religion is something vast,

* This same image was recently removed by the Bolsheviks, apparently without any opposition whatever. Such are the paradoxes of Russian history.

mysterious, miracle-working. Only Dostoevsky has brought out this quality of the Russian mind; his great work, "The Brothers Karamazov," essentially defines the attitude towards God of all its characters. And God is primarily to all, power, a force divorced from good or bad alike, that which will give each of these characters the desires of his own heart. Even old Karamazov, monster of immorality that he is and incapable of any redeeming action, in this sense worships God.

One is even more impressed at this emphasis on the magic power of religion made by the Russian mind, when one realises that the Church not only blessed the fields, agricultural implements and cattle of the peasants in the past, but also, according to Tolstoy, the government-owned vodka factories and the brothels. So strong was the feeling that religion gave to its professors a power of superhuman and super-moral healing and blessing, that a Rasputin could under the cloak of religion, carry on his shameless erotic practices undisturbed. The feeling that everything in religion was necessarily sacrosanct, accounts also for the rise of the Old Believers, who could not accept Peter the Great's and the Patriarch Nikon's reform of the spelling of the Church books. The Church, even in its errors, was so much above the world that the world must not interfere with it. The Word of the Church was

sacred, and must be held so at whatever cost to logic.

The typical Russian peasant would therefore have agreed with Blake that "everything that lives is holy" without adding thereto the corollary that the tradition of the Church was not a living thing, but was merely a dead tradition stifling the free spirit of independent inquiry. And even the thoroughgoing attack on religion and the Orthodox Church engineered by the Bolsheviks, has partaken of the same fanatic faith in the magic power of rites and phrases. The body of Lenin was substituted for saints and icons; and faith in Marxian formulas took the place of faith in Church ceremonies. We will not understand Bolshevism if we continue to think it irreligious. In all essentials it is simply a new religion—or if one prefers, a new heresy. It is rooted in the same fanatic faith in magic practices that the Russian mind has everywhere displayed, from the time that Ivan the Great spoke of the *pallium* of Rome being transferred to Moscow.

3

We are accustomed to think of America as primarily the land of religious toleration; but we are apt to forget that this toleration was only born after nearly a century of complete intolerance, in

which New England itself, then at the head of American colonial effort, took the lead. The American historian, Brooks Adams, in his "Emancipation of Massachusetts," has given us a useful summary of this period, dating from the foundation of the Massachusetts Colony down the the eve of the Revolution; and has shown us how the founders of New England, Endicott, Winthrop, and the rest, aimed at a thorough-going theocracy which would permit neither religious dissent nor liberty of conscience. The tale of executions, whippings, imprisonments, outrages and threats executed upon unfortunate Antinomians, Quakers, Episcopalians, and other sects dissenting from the "established faith" of New England Congregationalism makes painful reading.

As a matter of fact, American toleration rests and always has rested on respect for established property rights. The Puritans who founded New England had obtained a charter from the King enabling them to make a settlement in Massachusetts territory. They constrained this to mean that no other opposing Protestant sect would be allowed either to enter or to preach in their territory; while the Catholics in Maryland, the Episcopalians in Virginia behaved not very differently. Their religion became to them the symbol of their possessions—possessions that they guarded jealously not

less against all Indian attempts to recover them, but against Royal and Parliamentary interference alike. The result was that it was only such sentimental deists as Jefferson, or such sentimental Quakers as Franklin, who realised the necessity for toleration. They were in a minority. To most Americans religious toleration has been but a phrase for moral intolerance.

To this day in America, great educational foundations which enjoy enormous endowments, prestige, and power, are outwardly identified with certain religious sects. Nothing can be taught in them except what these sects prescribe as "moral." To the traveller in America, interested in education, it is often puzzling to be told that such and such a university has a chapel to which all students are compelled to go, although they may subscribe to some totally different religious creed. Thus Princeton is Presbyterian; Yale, Congregational; the University of Chicago, Baptist; Vanderbilt and dozens of other southern colleges, Methodist; and so on. The non-sectarian college or university is the exception, rather than the rule. And that is because religion and moral teaching go hand in hand.

The American, it must be understood, maintains the attitude of complete inner spiritual liberty only at the price of outward moral conformity. In this

respect he stands at precisely the opposite pole to the Russian, whose steady maintenance of inner spiritual obedience is frequently belied by furious outward revolts in the direction of complete moral license. Each has one half of a religion and each neglects the fact that every lasting religious body is a great compromise between the external and internal character of man, representing alike an outward discipline and an inner assent. To the American the assent is all that matters, not the discipline. Thus even so respectable a member of the Catholic faith as Governor Alfred Smith of New York could recently declare that he believed in the complete separation of the Church and State, and assert that the Church had no right to interfere with politics, without realising that in thus upholding the private assent of the citizen above all religious discipline, he completely destroyed the ancient Roman Catholic opposition to right of private judgment and thereby fully justified the long revolt of Protestantism.

In such a state as America presents to the world, religion becomes a question not of "By what power is God going to save me?" but of "How am I to behave, so as to do right?" This question lies at the root of the American conscience. If England is, as Frenchmen have said, the land of moral fog, America is the land of moral blindness. It has not escaped foreign observers that America is ruled

by sermons and by preachers. Here, indeed, American literature has little to reveal to us, as Russian literature has little to say about peasant superstitions concerning icons and saints' days.* But from Jonathan Edwards to Channing, from Channing to Henry Ward Beecher, from Beecher down to the recent Billy Sunday and Aimee McPherson, all America—vulgar as well as intelligent—waits every Sunday morning on its favourite preacher in order to obtain moral guidance for the ensuing week in its affairs. The sermon is to the American what the sacrament and the benediction is to the Russian—a special talisman, something enabling him to carry on his life, get his business done, clear up his relations with women, regulate his activity. Hence the enormous popularity in recent America of sermons dealing with the conduct of one's business. Hence the upholding of Jesus and the Apostles as typical "go-getters" and even efficiency experts; the culmination of which is in such a recent book as "The Man Nobody Knows" where Christ becomes the prototype of the typical American advertisement agent!

The typical American therefore conceives of everyone as being "free and equal" in Jefferson's phrase without adding thereto the corollary that everyone should be free to behave as it pleases him.

* A notable exception is the sermon in Melville's "Moly Dick."

On the contrary, the more you meddle with your neighbour's conduct the better for both him and you. The Americans tend more and more to substitute "uplift" in the place of religion—and the hankerings of the mystically-minded (mostly the least literate and least economically independent, therefore the least powerful) among them, pass unheard. Most Americans would readily subscribe to Mark Twain's dictum that man is "worthless unless he is regulated," and far from agreeing with Matthew Arnold that conduct is three-fourths of life, they would make conduct all of it. The belief that has emerged out of such a creed, resolutely held, may be briefly summarised as a faith that the increase of business, higher wages, and more prosperity on the American model will definitely save the world. This belief has already its apostles, chief of whom is perhaps Henry Ford. It, like Bolshevism, is a heresy, which we must nevertheless reckon with as America's chief contribution to the solution of the great religious problem which vexes the world. Instead of demanding that the oppressed proletarians everywhere must unite to conquer the world, it says simply, "Make your fortune quick. In prosperity lies happiness."

4

It is impossible to leave this subject of religion and of America's and Russia's peculiar angle of approach to it, without some reference to the reciprocal influence America and Russia have had on religion as practised in Europe. For both countries obtained their religions ultimately from this source, though in the one case it was Byzantine Orthodoxy that was borrowed, while on the other, it was Puritanic Northern Protestantism.

To the average American any European form of religion is not good enough. He demands a standard of conduct that is morally speaking, egalitarian. What shocks him in religion as practised in European countries is its disregard of the standards of living that he is accustomed to at home. The picturesque dirt and disorder of Italian lazzaroni, Spanish beggars, the promiscuity of English slums, the grossness of German or Dutch peasants—all this shocks him as a manifestation of moral blindness. He would gladly see all these peoples washed, sanitated, above all made literate: his own respect for "law and order," shown in the popularity of sermons, is proof of this. The ideal of useful citizenship which he maintains as substitute for the mystic experience of Godhead, or the no less mystic experience of repentance and recon-

ciliation, makes him intolerant of any creed that refrains from interference with the individual. His insistence upon moral conduct has made him frequently uncharitable to his own neighbours—as anyone who has lived for long in an American small town can testify. This uncharitableness he extends in even fuller measure to the stranger within and without his gates. The hordes of European immigrants that come into his own country, the hosts of unwashed and unregenerate foreigners without are not respectable—they do not regulate their lives by his standards. His solution of the problem upholds a great hope, but it is a hope without charity.

The average Russian, on the other hand, looks on European religion as deficient not in goodness, but in truth. Catholicism has merely become a branch of state-service, and Protestantism is too deeply tainted with moral hypocrisy. But what is important to the Russian to know is this; whether it is true that by any sacrament, prayer, or magic ritual men become united to God? Is it true that Christ really did rise from the dead for all mankind and manifests himself to them? Then let us make trial of that possibility. In the days before the downfall of the Romanovs, thousands of Russian peasants annually made the pilgrimage to Palestine, and thought themselves lucky if they died

on the banks of the Jordan, believing that by this magic act they would be immediately transported to Paradise, whatever their previous sins. And the whole basis of Dostoevsky's teaching, and to a great extent that of Tchekhov and Tolstoy, was that "everything must be forgiven." The whole of Russia demanded a miracle, and perhaps it was because the Bolsheviks promised such a miracle, that Russia accepted the Bolsheviks. Above all the miracle must come from without, and the Bolsheviks came from abroad bringing with them a new gospel. That was enough to convince millions who were utterly unprepared to accept the historic materialism, or the opposition to religion that lay at the root of Bolshevik teaching. The question the Russian continually asks—even the most open and avowed atheist among them asks it—is, by what means can man obtain the superhuman power to make himself akin to God? The Russian, in his desire for power, is willing to disregard every standard of ordinary moral conduct in order to become united to Godhead. The American, in his insistence on the Mosaic code which is motivated almost altogether by respect for property, is willing to take up the most intolerant Puritanism, rather than suffer interference with his property. Unlike the American creed of moral conformity to the community for the sake of material gain, the Russian religion has

infinite charity to the sinner, despises the wealth of the world, and produces outlaws, anarchists, schismatics continually. That is why to the Russian mind of to-day, a few words of Karl Marx or of Darwin may become equally important as a Gospel as anything in the Bible; it equally explains why to the American mind of to-day, a Bruce Barton or a Billy Sunday are of superior importance to Saint Augustine or the Apostles.

Chapter VIII

THE difference in attitude which the Russians and the Americans have displayed in regard to faith and moral conduct—a difference which rests, as we have shown, on a power-property antithesis—corresponds also to a not less illuminating difference in the field of intellectual speculation, and the fine arts generally. Neither country, it may be noted, took any part in the intellectual and social movement that is known as the Renaissance. The average Russian of the ruling landowning aristocracy, was violently thrown from the Middle Ages into the state politics of post-Reformation Europe, thanks to Peter the Great's reforms. The average American of the ruling New England mercantile caste began as post-Reformation Puritan of the English type, and steadily moved away from his early European environment into a primitive background of local politics that recalls the quarrels of the early Greek city-states.

Intellectual contact with Europe was begun and kept up at two removes in each case. In Russia as we shall see, European romanticism, in its cult of

the Gothic and feudal, was the most powerful influence in precipitating a national literature; in America the same contact was kept up through the influence of the English eighteenth century moralists, such writers as Addison, Goldsmith, Dr. Johnson, Pope, finding abundant imitators and followers in the Colonies.

Before the problems of Europe, and indeed the problems of the world generally, the Russian is likely to ask the question, "Why is this?" while the American asks the question, "How did it come about?" It is obvious that both questions are necessary, and both are justified at their proper time and place. The normal, untaught human being, before undertaking any action, customarily and humanly asks "Why?" His interest is primarily in the value of an action as such, not in the means whereby it is to be performed. Then when he has decided on performing the action, he is able to ask "How?" and thereby acquire the full technique necessary to accomplish it. But the untaught Russian, by asking "Why?" after, as well as before, undertaking action, simply fosters his own attitude of nihilism and inertia; and that the Russian has literally to be driven into action by intolerable circumstances, and then generally goes too far, is the chief lesson to be derived from the perusal of Russian history. The American, on the other hand, by

asking simply "How?" without examining beforehand the value of the act or its consequences, acquires a superior technical and executive skill at the expense of his ability to sort out what is worth undertaking from what is less worth undertaking. Neither regard "Why?" and "How?" as somehow complementary; neither are capable of the ordered development of investigation into causes combined with study of technique that goes on in European cultured circles.

The question "Why?" as opposed to the question "How?" when applied to life in the way that the Russians and the Americans apply them, leads, it is obvious, to diametrically opposing results. The Russian in his eagerness to find the underlying cause of every phenomenon, is apt to act, if at all, for a bewildering multiplicity of reasons; ranging from the desire to reform the world, or the desire to ensure his personal salvation, down to the mere desire to create mischief or relieve himself from boredom (like the heroes of Dostoevsky's "Memories from the Underground" and Sologub's "Little Demon.") The American, in his hope to master the technique of every possible form of human activity, is apt to apply his question, "How is this done?" to a bewildering multiplicity of ends. So much is this the case, that nothing is commoner in American life than to find men who drift from one

profession to another without mastering any. This is markedly the case even in American literature: Emerson transferred his activities from those of the pulpit to those of essay-writing; Mark Twain was pilot, gold-prospector, and author; Hawthorne and Melville were custom-house clerks, in their spare time, and so on—without any apparent loss of individuality. The versatility of the American mind, and its ability to turn from one thing to another, is perhaps its most outstanding quality.

This technical versatility not only explains America's undoubted primacy in the field of public works and of engineering, but it also provides an explanation for the complete lack of moral sense now and then shown by Americans; a lack which, on the face of it, strongly contradicts the lip-service which America still largely pays to the Mosaic and the Puritan code. Take for example, the notorious murder which agitated the American press a few years ago, when two youths, undoubtedly responsible for the murder of a friend, declared they had done it as an experiment, in order to see how it felt to be a murderer! These youths were only carrying to its logical extreme a tendency far too common in American life as a whole. The leading impulse of the American is to want to try something, to start something, to play at being something. It is for this reason that so many Americans

start in life as desiring to be authors or artists, only to find the attempt far beyond their capacity, and to realise later that they are better equipped as business men. For technical capacity alone, divorced from all preoccupation with ulterior aims, tends merely to exalt the executive faculties above the creative; it helps to make the majority of men into business men. The creative artist, equipped as he is with the imagination that concerns itself primarily with elemental cause and effect, learns his difficult technique by mastering the resources of his given material. The business man denying as he does any underlying purpose in himself or others except the purpose of making profits, applies to the whole of human life the prevailing standard of an easy and simple technique. And because this technique is simple and easily acquired, it becomes increasingly popular, so that the development of the arts and culture suffers from lack of those who will apply themselves to them.

It is for this reason that American life appears so standardized to foreign observers. This standardization is due to the fact that very few Americans are concerned with the question of the thing to be done, and most are concerned with the question of the technique of doing; and the simplest and easiest technique to master in America is that of making money. As regards the value of the money,

once made, Americans have no more conception of that than they have of the value of most things. In their lavishness and prodigality, they deserve to be called, for the most part, the spendthrift nation of the world. But having mastered the technique that is appropriate to their position as inhabitants of an economically prosperous country, they are as yet unwilling to master the technique that would make them great in other fields. And this concentration on the technique of money-making which has led to so much of America's standardization—and incidentally also to so much of its recent crime and moral callousness—is powerfully upheld by the present mechanical industrial epoch, with its decline in handicrafts, and the opportunities it offers to any business man to become the possessor, simply by buying a few specimens, of the best that the art of the past has already produced. It is for this reason that the average American tourist sees in Europe, not Europe's intensely persistent energy, nor the vitality of her ideas, nor the continual conflict between tradition and innovation, but only her cash value as a market for antiques.

2

The Russian attempt to find a single central idea to explain the universe, leads naturally to the exag-

gerated respect in which the Orthodox Church has been and is still largely held among a great many Russians—a respect which it took a Tolstoy to question, and which far surpasses the respect shown to the Roman Catholic Church even in the most Catholic countries. For the Orthodox Church represented a central idea, hallowed by tradition, and fortified by all the apparatus of miracle-working superstition. Most of Russian literature has been, however, the product of minds that are, consciously or unconsciously, in revolt from the Orthodox idea, and determined to find a central idea outside of it, in some reconciliation with European tradition, or in some reversion to Asiatic atavism. In this respect it is perfectly just to apply to the whole Russian intelligentsia class the epithet that Dostoevsky applied to the Western wing of it, the epithet of "uprooted."

This uprootedness, this inability to find a fixed centre, leads not only to the fantastic nihilism of much Russian literature and thought, but to its prevailing tone of tension and cruelty. It is a common complaint among European readers that Russian literature is morbid and gloomy. This complaint is, however, ill-founded. A reading of such European pessimists as Lucretius, Leopardi, Schopenhauer, or Thomas Hardy, reveals depths of accepted despair unknown to the Russian soul.

But Russian literature and thought is intensely direct and cruel, as all great metaphysical dialectic is cruel. The monstrous pantheon of Indian divinities and the pessimistic nihilism of the Upanishads is something not foreign to the Russian, as it is foreign to the European mind. Above all, Russian thought tends to display itself in startling contrast; to paint in bright, glaring primary colors. Here we have again an Oriental trait, and a strongly marked one. There are few nuances in Russian literature, and the writers who showed themselves masters of the nuance are, like Tchekhov and Turgenev, more highly appreciated abroad than at home.

American literature and thought, on the other hand, being largely concerned with technique, is apt to respond not to the idea, but to the formula. The figure of Sam Slick, the Yankee clockmaker and peddler, who certainly never thought for one moment whether clocks were of much use to his customers, but who knew all about how they were made, and could take them apart and put them together better than anyone, inevitably recurs to the memory when we try to envisage the typical American mind. How much of American political theory and activity, North and South, how much of the truly American passion for local laws, state and city ordinances, constitutional amendments,

legal innovations, has been due to this passion for meddling and tinkering—to this intensive study of technique! And the same passion reappears in the field of literature. In this respect the figure of Poe is particularly noteworthy. We can scarcely classify Poe as one of the greatest forces in American literature, because philosophically he had nothing whatever to say that had not already been said before him by the English romantics and the New England transcendentalists. But if we regard him as a virtuoso pure and simple, a virtuoso of technique, he immediately becomes perhaps the most important of all American authors. Poe was so intensely concerned with technique and technique alone, that he broke new literary ground in half-a-dozen different directions, without saying anything essentially new. He developed the lyrical refrain to a point unknown before his day. In "Ulalume" and "The Raven" he practically invented symbolism. He transformed the experimentally onomatopœic prose of De Quincey into the perfect prose poem. He invented the detective story. In his "Voyage of Arthur Gordon Pym" and other pseudo-scientific tales, he became the father of the scientific phantasy later developed by H. G. Wells, Jules Verne, and others. In his "Eureka," he even tried to reconcile scientific cosmogony and myth-making—a daring attempt that

had to wait till the post-Einstein period before it found imitators. It was this despised American hack whom most of the New England leaders of thought considered as a charlatan, who became the technical teacher of the whole generation of later symbolists and æsthetes in France and England; just as it was the purely moral and non-technical influence of Tolstoy that helped to produce much of the anti-æsthetic literature of the 'social document' type (Zola, Romain Rolland), later throughout Europe.

Poe was, however, not the only example of an American author concerned with formulæ. The prevalence of manner over matter may be observed in most American authors, and becomes overwhelmingly important when we turn from the field of literature proper to the field of public debate and political oratory. This field has been practically unknown in Russia, thanks to the activities of the censorship, and the general suppression of free speech, but such documents as have come down to us, such as for example, Dostoevsky's celebrated Pushkin speech, or Lenin's speeches, do not reveal any very great oratorical ability. Compare them with the rolling periods of Webster or even with such comparatively simple efforts as Lincoln's Gettysburg address, and the contrast is flagrant. The difference is that the Russian makes only a

single vast generalisation, that the Russian is omnihuman in destiny and is appointed by God to reconcile all the nations of the earth, and attempts to illustrate it prosaically by carefully chosen selections from Pushkin's or Marx's works.

But in the case of Webster, or of the Gettysburg Address, the whole speech is more or less a tissue of highly poetical generalisations. Specific argument there is little or none—the less the better. The influence of such oratory in its substitution of the telling phrase, the resounding but intellectually empty statement, upon social life in America is much more vast than can ever be imagined by most Europeans, and has been an almost unmixed evil. Its pernicious effects were again seen in the recent tragedy of President Wilson when confronted with the realities of the European situation, and the still more obvious, but lesser known, tragedy of the whole public and private career of the late William Jennings Bryan. This oratorical temperament which is so common in America, attempts to heal profound and rooted differences of race, religion, politics, society, by the application of a few telling phrases, a handful of brilliant slogans. The few great public speakers that Russia has produced, such as Lenin, have made no such fatal mistake. Their efforts, however lacking in the wholly tech-

nical qualities that sweep audiences off their feet, were masterpieces of close realistic, *terre-à-terre* argument.

3

America has already had three well-marked cultural and intellectual periods, each followed by a corresponding decline. The first—if we exclude, as we have a right to do, the stirrings of intellectual life in the Mathers and other purely colonial figures—began about the middle of the eighteenth century, culminated in the Revolution, and produced its last figures in Irving and Cooper. It was predominantly political and rationalistic. The second, beginning about 1840, the year before the publication of Emerson's first series of Essays, reached its climax in the years immediately preceding the Civil War, and died away in the seventies. It was romantic and sentimental. The third, stirring the dry bones of respectability with the wind of a new realism about 1890, is still continuing at the present day. In each case, the movement towards culture was halted by an external war, and dissolved later in a period of growing financial prosperity. The first period came to a full close by 1830, though Irving and Cooper were to survive it; the second stage was virtually at an end in 1875, when the

growing power of industrialism took the stage, challenging Emerson, Whitman and Melville; the third epoch may have already reached its culmination in the years following on the Great War. In each case, the successful wars in which America engaged, the Revolution and the War of 1812, the Mexican and Civil Wars, the Spanish War and the European War, diverted energy from American culture, and transferred it to the commercial, financial, and industrial field.

Like America, Russia has had three periods of culture. The first, under the leadership of Pushkin and Gogol, began with the Napoleonic struggle and ended about 1836—though Gogol himself was to survive it for a few years. It was predominantly romantic and revolutionary. The second began approximately with the Crimean War of 1854, culminated in the liberation of the serfs in 1861 and went on through the seventies. Its leaders were Turgenev, Tolstoy, and Dostoevsky. It was predominantly realistic and political. The third, beginning about 1890, has continued down to the present day. It is almost entirely symbolical in feeling.

In each case, Russia's foreign campaigns, whether successful or not, seem to have shaken up her pervading inertia and spiritlessness. The struggle with Napoleon gave rise to the brilliant

generation of Pushkin; the Crimean War inspired Dostoevsky and Tolstoy; the building of the Transsiberian Railway and consequent Japanese-Russian War, may be said to have created the school of the symbolists, which, as Prince Mirsky has said, dominated the first decade of this century. By the fluctuations of campaigns fought at a distance, as opposed to civil wars, Russia has been bettered: America has been spoiled by them, and has never stood so high in culture as she did during the brief years of her own civil war. That is because war abroad enlarges man's horizon, war at home limits it. The Russian type, prisoner to its own centrality, requires to escape continually from its petty and hampering environment; the American type, boldly going forth from itself into ever new regions, needs some force that will hold it at home and make it create a local centre of indigenous culture.

One can trace the same characteristics in the strong centralisation of Russian literary and spiritual culture, as opposed to its boundless diffusion in America. In Russia, all intellectual movements have gravitated from the beginning to Moscow and to Petrograd; in America, Concord, Richmond, Charleston, San Francisco, Chicago, Nashville, have all promoted new movements, each in a sense more important than anything achieved by New York. New York has been only a market-place, a

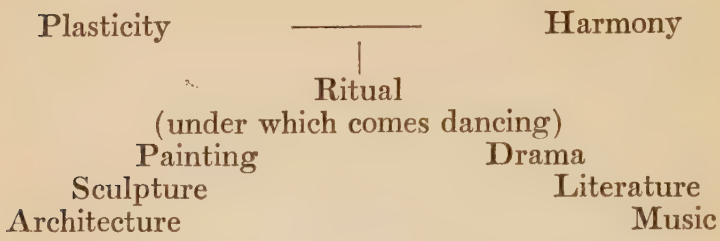
place where literary people may come together and drift apart, a temporary haven for those wearied of provinciality and wishing to assert their cosmopolitanism. American culture, in order to be itself, to find spiritual roots, has to flee from the mock cosmopolitan Europeanism of its capitals and to become provincial, rooted in the backwoods, solitary and remote, as were Thoreau and Hawthorne. Russian culture, on the other hand, in order to be itself, has to tend towards a definite centre. The European is freed from these distressing choices; the division between city-dweller and country-dweller is for him less sharp and severe. He is, if highly cultivated, a member of a mystic body which ignores national boundaries and has, in the largest sense, unity of purpose. He absorbs a certain quantity of American and Russian culture, but only to produce, under normal circumstances, its cleverly-compounded antidote.

From the centralised condition of Russian culture, and its opposite in America, it follows that the cultivated Russian who lives abroad, tends to become more democratic in his outlook, while the cultivated American under similar circumstances, tends to become more aristocratic. A centralised culture is impossible without an aristocracy to support it. Unless the ranks of society are graded and defined from above, the meanest workman can

become, economically and socially, the equal, if not the superior, of the finest scholar, the highest creative artist. Such a condition is what America definitely aspires towards. The condition which Russia tends to create is that no one, not the greatest artist, nor the finest scholar, should ever consider himself the equal of the mysterious ruler who, deriving his power from heaven alone, sits apart in the Kremlin. In America, the will being free, the quality of thought does not matter; in Russia, the will being subordinate, all can aspire to be thinkers. When a Russian goes abroad, the resultant liberation of his will enables it to act in harmony with his mind for the first time, so that he becomes an advanced radical; when an American takes up his residence in Europe, the freeing of his thought that takes place limits for the first time his boundless will, so that he usually becomes a traditional conservative.

But in thus entering upon and attempting to define the influence America and Russia have had on the whole field of intellectual and æsthetic effort we are at once challenged by more important distinctions. American thought tends to the rounded and static, Russian thought tends to lose itself in the eternal flow of harmony. Now if we try to make a scheme of the arts according to those which are more plastic and those which are more harmonic

in their outlook on reality, we will get a figure somewhat as follows:



Unless we do construct such a scheme in our minds, we can have no clear conception of what art is. For no other human concept has been so badly handled and blunderingly misunderstood as has this concept of art; and by none more than by the æstheticians. One is almost tempted to retort to the followers of Croce, who declare that all art is a pure abstract intuition of the artist, a reality apart from physical fact, that, on the contrary, art as an abstract concept has no reality, and that there is no such thing as art, there are only arts, each being a synthesis of certain aspects of objective reality. Art synthesises reality, as science analyses it; and the synthesis alters in outlook whether we see it from the aspect of time (which in the arts is music and corresponds to pure mathematics in the sciences) or from the aspect of space (which in the arts is architecture and corresponds to physics in the sciences). Which

of the arts we take as more fundamental or important than any other depends, after all, on the quality of our psychological outlook, not on the degree of our æsthetic appreciation. There can be no doubt that in an ordered state, the arts progress from the space organisation of architecture to the time organisation of music; just as in a disordered state, the fact that all the arts tend towards music is taken by æsthetic theorists to mean that music is the greatest of all arts.

It is interesting to attempt some application of this classification to the phenomena we have been discussing, of Russia and America. In these countries the art of ritual, which we have set at the summit of our pyramid, inasmuch as it contains elements of all the other arts and depends on them all for its own existence, stood at opposing poles from the very outset. There can be no two types of religious service more opposed in essence than the Orthodox Russian communion service and the Congregational, Methodist or Baptist "Sunday meeting." The one culminates in the invisible priest's taking of the sacrament behind the closed and veiled iconostasis, while the congregation without humbly wait on their knees; the other, culminating in sermon and offertory, is an act taken part in by the whole congregation, to whose willingness the minister is entirely subsidiary. How far these

two types of ritual have affected the arts of America and Russia is a question that only future manuals of æsthetics can settle. For the need of the moment is an æsthetic based on fruitful psychological principles, and not a purely theoretic æsthetic such as Croce offers us. But for this we may have to wait for another century.

Neither America nor Russia has been able to express to the full their native genius; they could only have done so had the French Revolution and Napoleonic wars been followed by a complete collapse of Europe. But it is probable that the direction of the American genius lies towards architecture, sculpture, and painting; the direction of the Russian genius lies towards drama, literature and music. Thus does art attempt to redress the balance which the social organisation overweights in the opposing direction. For the American continually tends to disintegrate, to be individualised, to evade the centre; while the Russian continually tends to reintegrate, to become centralised and feel the appeal of the universal. Art, seeking for a strongly-opposed principle of spiritual unity in each case, in America finds a plastic motive in organised space-architecture; in Russia it finds a dynamic motive in the harmonic time-rhythm of folk-song. Anyone who has seen an American skyscraper or who has heard a well-trained Russian

choir sing, will realise more fully than my words can tell him the implications of this statement.

The most characteristic new American contribution to art is probably the recessed skyscraper, of which an archetype was already produced before the white man saw the American continent, by the Pueblo Indians. The most characteristic new Russian contribution to art is probably the ballet, a mingling of movement and song, of which the archetype was to be found in the fairs and local feast days of old Russia. In both countries the connection between the arts, and notably between literature and painting, is closer than elsewhere. A Tolstoy could justify the increasing ethical tone of his art by an appeal to the practice of such painters as Jules Breton or Defregger; a Whistler could defend the increasing æstheticism of his by a passionate appeal to what is essentially literature and poetry. Neither country has arrived at the extreme limit of sophisticated culture to be found in Europe, with its chatter of vapid specialists.

4

When America and Russia started on their course as independent entities—which process beginning about 1688, only reached its consummation in a century—the style of architecture which pre-

vailed in both countries was remotely akin. The Russian style had previously been the Byzantine as modified by Levantine and Swedish influences. The American style, if we omit the Mayas, began as the colonial baroque, as developed by the architects who followed Sir Christopher Wren. Peter the Great, however, built his new capital in the baroque style, the style of Versailles and The Hague, and his influence contributed towards the relegation of Byzantine influence to the hinterland. It is this link of Baroque architecture that bridges a great gap between the mind of Russia and that of America.

Baroque architecture has been called by an English critic the "architecture of Humanism." It might equally be called the architecture of absolutism. For its leading æsthetic aim, which was, in the words of the same critic, to convey a sense of overflowing and exuberant strength, might be used, and in fact was used by two widely different political parties. It might convey a sense of overflowing and exuberant strength on the part of an oligarchical but popular republic, as in the case of the Salute at Venice; of a dramatic but popular creed, as in the case of the Church of St. Peter's; of a corrupt but prosperous administration as in the case of the houses of the great Whigs who ruled England. Or it might convey monastic seclusion, absolute obedi-

ence, complete autocracy, as in the case of the Jesuit churches, the Escorial Palace, or Louis XIV's palace at Versailles.

The later classical revival under the Empire, too, was double-sided. It might signify the sternness of unbending republicanism, or the dictatorship of Cæsarism. It was the former aspect that appealed to America; the classic there quickly overbore the baroque, and has persisted down to this day. On the other hand, the craze for baroque ornament and decoration persisted in Russia down to the time of the Great War. The early stage sets for the Russian ballet, notably the work of Benois and Bakst, are its last expression.

If we pass from architecture to painting, we get another set of contrasts. The ideal of Russian painting up to the close of the nineteenth century seems to have been the great historical panorama (Repin, Vereshchagin). On the other hand, the ideal of American painting has been since the days of Stuart, the portrait. Here we have again the contrasted principles of anarchic autocracy and republican individualisation that we find elsewhere. That neither Russian nor American painting amounted to much proves nothing, nor can we gain a point by saying that neither was highly aware of what was going on in Europe. American painters proved themselves to be good characterisers, but

bad decorators; Russian artists had the will and desire to execute great decoration, but character was beyond their grasp. Similarly Russian sculpture tends to the eccentric, the unbalanced; American to the static and commonplace.

The contrast is still more marked when we come to the art of literature. Throughout Russian literature the noblest character is frequently shown as doing the weakest and most ignoble things. American fiction, on the other hand, tends to exalt the ignoble, to give the most dignified actions to the character one would suppose least capable of them. This will appear more fully in the later analysis.

In drama the taste of the American public has always been for melodramatic situations and broad handling; in Russia for inconclusive and complex situations and subtle handling. One need only compare the spectacular heaviness of the later O'Neill plays with the extreme subtlety of Tchekhov.

To conclude with the art of music, we may say that in America the composer has tended to construct well, but to characterise poorly; in Russia to construct badly but to characterise well. All these differences in art-practice arise from the fact that in both countries the system of society is greater than the will of any individual to support it. But the system itself in Russia is autocratic, centralised, bureaucratically ordered; therefore the

individual who revolts from it, revolts upon impulse. He is instinctively an anarchist; his protest is of the heart, not the reason. The system in America is anarchic, decentralised, dependent solely on individual enterprise; therefore the individual who revolts, acts upon reflection, he is intellectually and spiritually an aristocrat (even when he calls himself a radical), his protest is one of reason and commonsense humanity. Thus we see that art in both countries exists not as an expression of tradition, but as a protest against a political and social tradition that is felt in some way hostile to life. For this reason art in both countries is in essence revolutionary; it does not aim at correcting and changing tradition so much as destroying it.

BOOK III

"Russia began by asking Europe for the finished products of western civilisation, to meet the requirements of her state service. It was not in this offhand way that Europe had been able to produce these finished products, which had behind them a whole background of civilisation. Gradually the Russian customer was driven backwards to a fuller and closer appreciation of what he really lacked. He began by asking for weapons and went on to ask for military training. He began by asking for clocks or any other fascinating machinery and went on to ask for technical service. He began by asking for ready-made books on given subjects, and went on to ask for education. He began by asking for knowledge and inevitably, however slowly, he was compelled to recognise the need for that training of character which can alone produce competent, self-respecting and honest servants of the state. He began by asking for the end and went on with infinite inner conflicts and searchings of heart to ask for the beginnings."

PROFESSOR BERNARD PARES,
"A History of Russia."

"Our America to-day I consider in many respects as but indeed a vast seething mass of materials, ample, better (also worse) than previously known; eligible to be used to carry towards its crowning stage and build for good, the great ideal nationality of the future . . . no limit here to land, help, opportunities, mines, products, demands, supplies, and with—I think—our political organization, national, state, and municipal—permanently established as far ahead as we can calculate, but so far no social, religious, or æsthetic organizations consistent with our politics."

WALT WHITMAN,
Preface to 1872 Edition of "Leaves of Grass."

Chapter IX

APART from the influence of politics, the greatest spiritual influence that Russia and America have had on the world for a century past has been manifested through their respective literatures. It is to this field that we must now turn, for the most striking series of our parallels. This literature has been, in both cases, something so entirely apart in its inner development from anything produced in Europe before the end of the eighteenth century, that we cannot apply to it the traditional standards of European criticism. Unlike what has been the case in European literatures, the literary form itself has not emerged from the sociological and moral factors generally prevailing at the moment. Rather has it been used as a weapon of protest, as a means for overcoming the stultification of the environment, in both America and Russia. It has been essentially revolutionary, dictated by a small protesting minority, rather than rooted in the traditional lore of the soil.

At the close of the eighteenth century, as we have seen, the mind of Europe became divided between

the rival claims of absolutism and of radicalism. A wave of romantic sentiment, of revolutionary storm and stress, with its longing for a past that could no longer exist, together with its intense democratic feeling for the forgotten folk sources of art, swept over England and Germany, and began to appear in France. It made impossible henceforward the frigid artificialities of form displayed in the poetry of Pope and Johnson, the dramas of Voltaire, the essays of Addison and Fontenelle, the epic of Klopstock. And it was from this rising wave of Romantic sentiment that both America and Russia started on their careers as independent producers of literature. They have continued on their way as literary countries thanks altogether to nineteenth-century romanticism. Without some understanding of the struggle between romanticism and realism, their literary history does not make sense, it has neither cohesion nor development. It is true that both countries have produced devotees of classical form, but for the most part in the shape of critics, not creators. The underlying genius of both countries has been unable to accept the European tradition, even when it was imitated; it has forced itself into alien moulds only to burst them. One cannot deny for example that Whitman's poems are poems, nor that Dostoevsky's novels are novels. Only they corre-

spond to nothing either in form or content or mental attitude that was done before them as poems and novels. The word itself, freed from considerations of economy, tradition, and classical usage, makes here its own form; arbitrary, intensely personal, always stumbling and shambling on the brink of incoherence.

It is therefore impossible to write a just and final literary history of either country. In this field everyone is a partisan. According to whether the critics' prepossessions are for literature that reflects that social struggle, or for finished beauty of form, or for profound and tragic revelation of unsuspected depths of life; according to whether the critic of Russian and American literature is primarily a social reformer, an academic humanist, or an advanced radical theorist, the judgment will fall. Kropotkin cannot endure the later Dostoevsky; hundreds of American professors cannot endure Whitman. The utmost that can be done is to let one literature illuminate the other, to show how the same psychological factors produce often closely corresponding results, to draw parallels between those portions of the literature of both countries that have most closely affected Europe. So only do we get any insight into the mysteries of the Slav and American soul. Only in literature is so close an insight possible; in American paint-

ing and architecture, and in Russian dance and music, we have also national expressions, but limited, tentative, and owing to their fundamental differences in formal approach (the static and plastic as against the auditory and agitated) very difficult of comparison. It is possible in some respects to bring the products of the written word in each European country together; we can for example set up a comparison between the drama of Lope de Vega and Calderon, the drama of Corneille and Racine, the drama of Ben Jonson and Shakespeare. But it would be far more difficult if we tried to compare sculpture and painting as practised in the three countries mentioned over that period. So in the case of Russia and America, we must concentrate on the written word as being the most accessible and comprehensible means of comparison.

We may admit at the outset that to most observers modern Russian literature is far richer in individual talent, and in works of high ability, than American literature has hitherto been. This is due to the working of three very important factors. In the first place, Russia from the outset had a racial, soil-rooted language of its own and was not forced to transform traditional English modes of expression to fit an altered environment, or to teach an immigrant population. In the second, the fact that political discussion of every sort was forbidden in

Russia during most of the period under review, while America has lived in a perpetual atmosphere of constant political agitation, made many more choose the profession of authorship in Russia, while in America it tended to make many who might have been writers, into politicians, orators, publicists. In the third place, before beginning to create a modern literature on her own account, Russia had already a rich folklore and legendary history of the past to draw upon. In the case of the Americans, the folklore and traditions of the early Indians, even of the French and the Spanish settlers, were in a sense so foreign to the dominant English-speaking psychology, that they could not be used, except as exotic colour. The result was that to this day the American writer, with all the ability in the world, has less material to his hands. Homer could not have been Homer had he come to Greece from, let us say, Egypt, without understanding or appreciation of the past. The American writer is more frequently found in that predicament than the Russian. He has neither a tradition of folklore to fall back upon for the past, nor essentially an individual experience, out of which to build up his present day. Only too frequently in America a usable past (to borrow the phrase of a well-known American critic) and a meaningful present fail to coincide to produce the literary masterpiece.

Yet a parallel between both countries is not only necessary, but psychologically illuminating. This parallel will follow the lines of the historical parallel, already tentatively traced for the outward events, in the first book of this study. Here too we will see two forces starting from opposite poles approaching a coincidence only to diverge and to again approach coincidence. Here too we watch the interplay of the same underlying climatic and soil factors on extremely mixed races that start life under widely different political and social constants. What is more, this parallel supplements and completes the other. It enables us to disentangle the essentially Slavic element from the essentially American element of the two cultures. It may even show how these two forces operating freely in the world for a century and a half, like the opposing poles of an electric battery, may ultimately be reconciled, if not in the field of the practical, at least in the field of the ideal; how they not only closely correspond to each other, but ultimately become one.

2

The first stirrings of independent American literature (as distinct from Colonial literature, or Red Indian traditions) appear most clearly in the writings of Benjamin Franklin. The first stirrings of

Russian literature as distinct from a few court writers such as Derzhavin in the Catherine period, to whom might be added Catherine herself (although she wrote in French), and the remnants of old Slavonic traditions, appear in the writings of Krylov. What strikes us instantly about these two writers—the penniless American journalist who steadily climbed the ladder of success until he reached the top, and the son of the poor army officer who likewise spent a lifetime in journalism to emerge at last as a sort of social lion—is the curious impression of shrewd, canny and independent worldly wisdom that emerges from the pages of both. Neither is a literary hero, nor an independent creator, nor a prophet. Both have a utilitarian side, a leaning to moral teaching, closely allied to a great deal of homely common sense. It is true that Franklin spent much of his energies in political agitation and in scientific research, which detracts from his magnitude as an author. But as has already been pointed out, the same field was not open to the Russian, with the result that his satire is both sharper and tenser. Yet Franklin's "Autobiography" is a fable of the industrious apprentice making his way through the ranks of Colonial society, as Krylov's so-called fables are real pictures of the artificial and vain social order (shaken by the French Revolution) in which Krylov, the idle and

pleasure-loving, found himself. Both contain elements of poetry, but these elements are of small importance as compared to the prose content. And both were, precisely because they limited their aims to what was immediately possible, rather than to what was the ideal statement, immensely popular.

From such small beginnings American and Russian literature emerged on the world's stage with Alexander Pushkin and Washington Irving. It may seem to the casual and purely objective observer that no parallel is at all possible between these two men. Irving was simply an agreeable minor writer, with a prose style of considerable urbanity and charm, who happened for a time to be ranked above his merits abroad as at home, and who now is conveniently forgotten; whereas Pushkin was above all a great and original poet. Yet this verdict which might be passed by nine out of ten European literary critics is, quite possibly, a false one. Of the two writers it is Irving who is the most original, as he had none of the stock of folklore or of ancient tradition to go on; all that had been swept away from under his feet by the Revolution, and had to be discovered or invented afresh. He was in the position of an artist who has to paint a new picture on a blank canvas without either brushes or colors. On the other hand, Pushkin could simply use the old material that lay to his

hand, and his task was merely to interfuse it with a new revolutionary spirit. If we can think of Irving as detached from European literature as Pushkin was; if we can remember that living on the Hudson, he was as socially remote from the world of Addison and Goldsmith, whom he admired, as Pushkin in the Caucasus was remote from Byron and Sterne whom he worshipped, we can reach a juster estimate of the achievement of both men.

There is a feeling of nostalgia for the past that, particularly in autumn, assails one in such a new country as America with even greater force than anywhere in Europe. To the European, especially to the dweller in a cosmopolitan city, the relics of the Middle Ages, the richness of the Renaissance, the courtliness of the eighteenth century are, after all, dead and vanished remnants of a force that has long since flowed into other channels. But to the American who has never known them, these things appear under their most Utopian aspect, as examples of a life full of leisure, where work was despised, people were free, natural and gracious, and harmony with inner and outer nature was achieved. The American is afflicted therefore with an incredible nostalgia for the past, the European past, but the country he sees about him offers no past at all but that of the wilderness, of the pioneer and the Indian. He therefore aims, according as

he is sensitive to beauty, or fundamentally in discord with his own surroundings, either to transfer the riches of Europe bodily to his shores and to strive to live in the midst of them; or to revert to pure and simple savagery. The first path was that trodden by Irving; the second was that chosen by Cooper.

The quality that made Irving a classic author during his lifetime and that kept him so, arose from his overwhelming grace of expression. Around the poor and threadbare material of folklore at his disposal he threw the beauty of an incomparable style, a manner of telling that makes of him still the most readable of American authors. "Rip Van Winkle," "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," "The History of New York" are all minor incidents of life, enlarged and expanded to their utmost limit, avoiding the tensity of great tragedy, but crammed with the humor of a disillusioned romanticism. They are not, like the works of their contemporary Scott, direct assimilations and fresh re-creations of the material of the past. Irving stands aloof from his own fantasy, and warns us that this is how life may have been once lived, but that after all life cannot go on in this way. Thus an undercurrent of melancholy is unavoidable to the careful reader of these stories. When Irving's heart is more closely engaged, as in his fantasies of the Alhambra,

he becomes at once even more supreme as an artist, but less human in range. He seems to be thinking always that all this enchantment is purely imaginary, and that his people are not real men and women. His Alhambra is not so much a castle in Spain, as a castle in the air. Later Irving tried to remedy this defect by writing objective history, and busied himself with the life of Columbus, of Washington, of Astor. But even here he was dogged by the curious unreality that is the fate of the romantic who cannot find romance in the world that is about him, or in his own immediate race-memories. His Columbus is a mediæval stained-glass saint. His Washington is a classical plaster-cast. Only his Astor has any reality. Thus Irving's later works are inferior to his earlier. He was not equipped to draw men of action but only such dreamers as Rip Van Winkle and Wouter van Twiller. And an underlying mistrust of women—explainable by the fact that Irving was a bachelor with several unsuccessful love-affairs to account for—emerges equally from these classically built pages.

The problem that Pushkin set himself to solve was, in all essentials, similar to the problem that bothered Irving. Only in Pushkin's case there was no lack of material for his talent—rather the reverse, which explains why, in his short and dis-

ordered life, he was able to turn out so much that is memorable. Pushkin's question was how to put this material into classic form, how to make it appear light, graceful, easy and charming. That he solved this question, and wrote works of great exhilaration and formal perfection in his youth, in a language which was before his day barely more than a barbaric dialect, is the considered verdict of everyone who knows Russian. But this achievement did not satisfy Pushkin. He did not believe in the world that he himself had created, and an endless succession of folk-heroes, of Russlans and Ludmillas, could not satisfy him for long. His private attitude was atheistic and what is more anarchistic, as is indicated by the obscene Gabriliad and many another youthful poem. As he grew older he tried more and more to find a world in which to believe, with the result that this scion of the nobility took to posing as a peasant, and cultivated an air of heroic misanthropy, derived from Byron. The two forces flowed together in "Eugene Onegin," which is the one work of Pushkin that has united all his qualities. Here under the mantle of Byronism which he had wrapped round himself, and which essentially belied his own care-free temper, we get a world which is real but detestable, and in which the bitterness stands close to the surface. Yet this world, from which neither Pushkin nor any other

later Russian has found escape, was in a sense forced on him by outer circumstances, particularly by the great early emotional crisis of his life, which came from his secret sympathy with the Decembrist uprising in 1825 (when he was twenty-six) which he later had to disavow in order to escape Siberia. This crisis was fatal to Pushkin's harmony, in the same way as Irving's early emotional crisis, his engagement broken by death, was fatal to Irving. The remainder of his work is a prolonged emotional dissatisfaction, much on the lines of Irving's half-humorous stories. Pushkin became a realist despite himself, as Irving a romanticist despite himself. Each is therefore a classic in the Russian or American sense, but not in the European.

3

With James Fenimore Cooper we approach a very different problem. This honest, stern and embittered man, at war with society and himself, whose best writing was done at the latest period of his development, is perhaps to-day the least known and least appreciated of American writers. This is due to the fact that about much of his work he deliberately threw the false glamour of an idyllic romanticism. Hating the frontier as he did, hating equally the time-serving and vulgar democracy of

his own period, he sympathised at heart with nothing but the already remote past of the Indian scout (of whom he has left us an immortal portrait in Leatherstocking) and fundamentally the Indian himself. An aristocrat to the bone, he threw himself repeatedly back upon the eighteenth century. In his love of what was already a remote and murky past, he recalls the Russian historian Karamzin, who similarly after an early period of political polemic, went back to the past and strove to glorify it. And the result was much the same in both cases. Karamzin's Russian history is, in the opinion of most critics of standing, not really a history at all, but a marvellous portrait gallery of living men and women held together by a flowing stream of narrative tending to idealise and prettify the details of the picture he was presenting. Cooper's romances are similarly not romances at all, but wonderful pictures of bygone events, storms at sea, revolutionary battles, adventures in the wilderness, similarly vitiated by a tendency to write idyllically about the past. And as Cooper influenced Melville and hundreds of other American writers of adventure tales, so Karamzin influenced Gogol and Dostoevsky. Cooper was indeed more important as an influence than as an actual creator. Where he was great was in Uncas and Chingachgook and

Leatherstocking; his noble and persistent belief in character saved him from incredible sentimentality of incident and a viciously mannered style. The untold glory of the already vanishing heroic age of American life when men took their lives in their hands and lived alone with the wilderness, fired Cooper. He was scarcely adequate to the tragic implications of his own theme.

Here we reach a point that is important for us to understand if we are to grasp the real nature of the underlying contrast between American and Russian culture, and the common causes of their failure. Under the system of levelling democracy such as America adopted and practised, men could not combine together to wrest a meaning and significance from frontier conditions except by making sacrifice of some part of their own personality. The complete personality, therefore, as such, stood outside the bounds of American organised society, and became inarticulate, unformed, illiterate, and to all intents and purposes, a pariah and an outlaw. A Daniel Boone, a Leatherstocking, or in a later age, a Kit Carson, or a Huckleberry Finn, are the authentic "originals" of the American landscape. In their presence everything else becomes feebly Colonial; an imitation of remote European manners and traditions. Only in the South, where some elements of

settled aristocracy had rooted themselves, could culture and personality exist side by side in the same individual, and this culture took social and political, rather than literary forms. The North and the ever-widening frontier of the West were incapable of producing a single personality of the intellectual range and poised character of Jefferson. At the other end of the scale, under the increasing centralisation and autocracy of the Muscovite Czars, no one could have independent personality except the Czar himself and a few important nobles of his entourage. The system of abolishing local independence worked, as a leveller of the mass, with equal efficiency as the system of mob-democracy. Only a few of the older Slavonic and Baltic nobility resisted, and it was within their ranks that literature was cultivated, as it was within the ranks of the better-bred families of America that the first attempts at an indigenous culture took place.

4

In both Russia and America, therefore, the rage for imitation of European ways of life and thought early became of equal importance with the suppressed desire to shape life according to local conditions. This fact explains the popularity of such

figures, for instance, as Bryant and Zhukovsky. Bryant simply transported bodily the nature feeling of Wordsworth to the American scene, as Zhukovsky tried to interfuse the idyllic sentiment of Parny and Chenier into his aboriginal background. Both spent a large part of their lives as translators; a task far easier to the Russian than to the American, as the Russian could not fail to enrich his material (chosen frequently from third-rate European sources) by contact with far deeper and more lasting earthborn springs of inspiration, whereas the American impoverished his by a scrupulous and Puritanic zeal for correctitude. Both translated Homer, but while Zhukovsky's translation became and remained a Russian classic, Bryant's translation is a monument of Puritanic austerity and plainness and is likely to abandon the mind of the cultivated English-speaking reader in favour of the surging violence of Chapman, the artifice of Pope, or the rich and tender idyllism of Butcher and Lang. But for all that, Bryant's "Iliad" and "Odyssey" are Greece as seen through American eyes, and their homespun dignity are more valuable, because more native, to the American critic than any European version. The impulse both Bryant and Zhukovsky gave to translations has persisted throughout the whole range of Russian and Ameri-

can literature; it is symptomatic of the fact that culture in both countries is not a natural growth, but something that has to be propped up and supported by continual reference to what goes on without, in lands where authors are born to more settled traditions.

Chapter X

THERE comes a moment in the history of every people when, by some almost imperceptible inner growth of cultural self-consciousness, a great, new, and original art is born among them. This moment coincides with the first slackening of the impulse that has made the particular people whose history we are surveying, free and victorious in their long struggle for unity and liberty. The period that follows in every case depends upon an emergence from early political upheaval and chaos, and in its frankness and joyousness, resembles the coming of spring. A slackening of unified political effort takes place, and a corresponding increase of individual talent in other fields. Italy reached this moment with her pictorial arts and literature early in the fourteenth century; France under Ronsard and the Pleaid; England under the Tudors. In Russia and America the old cultural background, such as it was, blocked the path of a new birth down to the period at which we have now arrived in the course of our study. Russia's Renaissance and America's Renaissance coincided; both

began about 1830. The first great figures that these two Renaissances produced in the field of literature were Gogol and Hawthorne.

Let us look for one moment at the social conditions under which these two men came to maturity. In Russia the whole period is covered by the reign of Nicholas I. Alexander I, who had succeeded in 1794 and whose reign had led to a complete triumph over Napoleon after Moscow, died in 1825. His reign had strengthened the hold of the autocracy upon the great mass of the population, and had enormously increased as well the prestige of Russia in Europe, but had successively alienated the more enlightened nobility, who were all for the contemporary remedy of Western liberalism—a constitution. His death was the signal for the abortive uprising of the Decembrists, who were one and all nobles and could command little support in the army. The aim of Nicholas was to preserve everything exactly as it had been left by Alexander. Personally friendly as he was to liberal thought at the beginning, patron of both Pushkin and Gogol, possessed of great native courage and invincible determination, the movement of events in Europe from 1830 to 1848 forced him little by little into the camp of the extreme reactionaries, and the close of his reign found even the Slavophils in opposition to the Czar. By his per-

sonal interference in the affairs of Poland and Turkey he drew down upon him the enmity of Austria, England, and France, at that time the three greatest European powers. In regard to literature and the spread of ideas, his reign was marked by a steady growth in the power of the censorship, tending to abolish every manifestation of original thought.

All during this time, the pressure of Russia on its westward frontier, the frontier of Europe, was enormous, as during the same period America exerted immense pressure on its own westward frontier—the frontier that led through the Spanish colonial possessions, to the Pacific. The increase in repressive autocracy in Russia, under Nicholas I, was counterbalanced in America by a great increase in expansive democracy. The period opens with the disappearance of the last of the old Federalist "dynasty" among the Presidents, which had ruled (with the slight interregnum of Jefferson's presidency) from Washington's presidency down to 1829. At that date John Quincy Adams went out of office. He was succeeded by Andrew Jackson who was not only a democrat, but a backwoodsman, a Southerner, and an apostle of the common people. The only opposition Jackson need fear was from the aristocratic and older South, in the person of John C. Calhoun, and to a slight extent from the

Northern Whigs. The latter party were soon conciliated, and for the rest of that period under review, down to the Civil War, we have a series of presidents whose democracy, slightly tainted with Whiggism, leads to a remarkable series of compromises between the agricultural and slave-holding South and the industrial and trading North, and the ever-expanding Western territory which in theory (but not in fact) lay equally open for both sections—Northern and Southern—to settle upon and inhabit. What makes this period remarkable in American history is first, the constant succession of characterless and feebly respectable presidents—Van Buren, Fillmore, Pierce, Buchanan—so characterless and feeble that a single Calhoun who spent his lifetime in opposition to the whole system resembles a giant by comparison; second, the increasing pressure on the southwest, on Mexico, which resembles Nicholas First's increasing pressure on Turkey; and third, the growth of literature in the midst of a system which was politically corrupt and persisted wholly on the principle of "to the victors belong the spoils," yet did such lip-service to respectability that Hawthorne himself dared scarcely mention directly the word "adultery" in his masterpiece. We would do well to recall the Russian censorship in this connection, as also the fact that under Nicholas I, government bribery and corruption (as

revealed by the Crimean War) reached a level only paralleled later under Nicholas II.

Under such conditions, the genius of Gogol and Hawthorne came to flower. So close were they, not only in the themes upon which they worked, but in their personal psychology, their inmost successes and failures, that it matters little which we take first. But inasmuch as to the English-speaking Occidental, the Russian's art illuminates by contrast that of the American's, whereas the reverse is less likely to be true, we will take first the career and activity of the unhappy man who more than any other, made Russian literature what it specifically is.

2

Nikolay Vasilievich Gogol was born on March 19, 1809, in a market town of Sorochintsky in the province of Poltava. He came from a family of Ukrainian Cossack gentry. The district in which he had been born he himself immortalized in his story of "Taras Bulba." It was the district beginning about two hundred miles south of Moscow, embracing Kiev and the dangerous shallows and rapids that encumber the course of the lower Dnieper, which was the important "river road" leading to what throughout the Middle Ages was Russia's main sea frontier: the frontier of the Black

Sea. In the words of an able American commentator on Russian affairs this district, known as the Ukraine, was "the Border Marches. Naturally it has varied, in different epochs, just as our western frontier (pretty nearly its exact equivalent) varied at different periods throughout the history of the United States, and was pushed further and further from the eastern centre of civilisation. In the case of Russia, Moscow represented that centre." *

In this district, then, Gogol was born. His people were the Ukrainian Cossacks. This word meant to the Russian mind not an independent race, but an independent class: the freebooter, the military nomad of the boundless plain, the man whose home was the saddle, and whose roof was in the sky, the exact counterpart of the Western American "bad man." But unlike the "bad man" of the West, these Cossacks had been deliberately sent to populate the Ukraine by the policy of the government. In the reign of Ivan the Terrible, it became necessary to have a military force on this southwest frontier, in order to hold back the Crimean Tartars, who were continually threatening Moscow through advance from the Kherson peninsula. Czar Ivan thereupon collected all the young men of adventurous disposition and warlike tendencies that could be

* Isabel F. Hapgood. Introduction to "Taras Bulba." New York, 1915.

found for this purpose. Most of them were, in fact, criminals—a body of men, warring alike upon Pole and Turk, who lived in semi-monastic state in a movable capital on the banks of the Dnieper, and who had become so great a menace to the Czar himself that after Pugachev's rebellion in the reign of Catherine the Great, they were suppressed. It was from this group Gogol sprang.

He was, in fact, the last flower of the old Cossack independence of spirit. After a sensitive, sickly, and morbid boyhood, he drifted to St. Petersburg at the age of twenty, equipped with nothing but a bad idyllic poem and a boundless ambition and vanity. Here he was taken up by literary society and his first book of Ukrainian tales, "Evenings on a Farm near Dikanka," made such a sensation that he rapidly became a social lion. He produced more tales and attempted to become a teacher of history with small success. But he became increasingly the idol of the more idealistic Russian intellectuals whose spiritual home was Moscow, and whose aims were Slavophilism. Towards this group he gravitated increasingly. His comedy, "The Government Inspector," was an immediate and unqualified success of mingled admiration and disparagement, and he was now able to go abroad, choosing Rome as a place of residence. From there, he came back to Russia, with the first part of his masterpiece "Dead

Souls" (published 1842). But life abroad and still more the homage paid to him, had convinced him that he must have some greater mission than merely to be a writer. He must become a prophet, and regenerate Russia spiritually. His first attempt in this direction took the form of the religious prose polemic, "Select Passages from a Correspondence with Friends." In this book, he throws overboard the St. Petersburg Liberals and the Moscow Slavophils alike, and reveals himself shamelessly as a preacher of nothing but dumb obedience to the Czar, ready to transform his mission of regeneration into the rôle of an upholder of complete reaction in religious and political matters. Only an intense egotist could have written such a book, with its attacks on all who had helped him in the past, and henceforth Gogol had no friends. He could not find peace either within or without Russia, and pilgrimages to the Holy Land, restless self-abnegations, tormented repentances, were alike in vain. In 1852, he died having by his own act destroyed the greater portion of the manuscript of the second part of his "Dead Souls."

The inner history of Gogol is that of a man who seeks freedom everywhere but can find it nowhere in the self-satisfied, petty bourgeois civilization of his epoch, with its scum of semi-concealed political corruption floating on the top of artificial manners,

its apeing of foreign fashion, its sentimentality and sordidness. All this comes out very strongly in the novel which is Gogol's unquestioned masterpiece, his "Dead Souls." The hero of this book, Chichikov, is a sort of picture of Gogol himself, in his aimlessness, his self-satisfied inferiority, his timidity with women. He has conceived a brilliant plan, of obtaining an heiress in marriage by representing himself as a large landowner with a great number of serfs. To carry this plan into effect, he buys up from the landowners of a certain district, the serfs that have recently died or run away, and whose names, not having been struck off the census rolls, still leave their owners liable to payment of poll tax for them. Equipped with this list of "dead souls" he intends to pose as a wealthy man, but his scheme fails through his own impudence. Gogol certainly meant to make Chichikov attractive, and even to show his "regeneration" in the second part, which was never finished; but Chichikov remains at best a mean-spirited busybody, at worst a base adventurer with an undeveloped moral sense. What the book is chiefly remarkable for is its extraordinary portrait gallery of characters each set in their appropriate surroundings of Russian landscape. As Chichikov drives hither and thither on his enterprise of cheating, we are treated to a panorama of Russian landscape and of Russian life, and each

is as dreary as the other. This novel has been compared to "Pickwick Papers," but the laughter of "Dead Souls" is bitter and harsh and menacing. One cannot avoid a feeling as one reads on and on that the dead peasants whom Chichikov absorbs were at least once men, fully alive, unspoilt and integral (however degraded their conditions of existence); but that the living landowners who possess them—with the exception of the half-crazy old maid Korobotchka who gives the plot away, and the embittered miser Plyuskin,—are neither wholly alive nor honest. They are walking ghosts, horrible simulacra; rotting away within, the degenerate self-satisfied scions of all manner of public and private corruption.

"Dead Souls" remains valuable therefore chiefly as satire—a bitter satire by a "soul" itself in peril of death; one who had come to central Russia from the freer, wilder atmosphere of the frontier, and who had there earnestly sought for truth and beauty only to find stifling mediocrity, hypocrisy, and corruption. From this strain of satire, Gogol himself vainly sought escape; escape into the wild heroism of the old Cossack life vividly described in "Taras Bulba," escape into peasant folklore, escape into morbid religious introspection. Gogol is usually credited with being the first thoroughgoing Russian realist, but in fact realism was to him always the

enemy. On its face appeared the grin of the evil one, or the smirk of the hypocrite. Only once is Gogol the objective realist in his play the "Government Inspector." Here he merely set down the facts, and gave his skill in dialogue a free run. The result was equal to the most bitter and cruel of all his satires; all the bitterer because here there is no fantasy to fly to, no charm of sentiment to colour it. For the whole of his life, Gogol struggled like a man in a net. He must speak the truth, but the truth only hurt him. He must create beauty. He had the courage to call "Dead Souls" a poem, and his whole career was like a boldly planned and beautifully conceived raid of a daring chief into the heart of a hostile country. But when he had arrived at the summit of his career, beauty still mocked him from far away. Gogol left Russian literature neither romantic nor realistic; he mingled humor with bitter earnest, and magnificence with sordidness. In the end he could not write any more. The warring forces within his soul tore him to pieces.

3

The career of Hawthorne, if we set aside slight differences in early environment and upbringing, was startlingly parallel. In his inner life, Hawthorne was the exact counterpart to Gogol. He

was born in 1804 of what might be called America's radical aristocracy, the long line of Puritan legalists, divines, and shipmasters that had been the bulwark of the attacks against England's unifying and centralizing tendencies, from 1629 to the Revolution. An ancestor had taken part in the hanging of witches and whipping of Quakers; just as an ancestor of Gogol probably took part in the scenes of raid and rapine that are so vividly told in "Taras Bulba." A delicate childhood, a melancholy, secretive and hypochondriac disposition, a precocious desire to write, complete the picture. But unlike Gogol, Hawthorne did not have to travel from his home to attain fame as a writer. He was born and already established at the centre where all movement of ideas took place: within sight of Boston. In his day, the force that had made the Revolution a success, and had given New England the intellectual and moral primacy of the New World, was already weakening. Further and further off the frontier was moving, across the Mississippi. As each new barrier interposed by nature was passed, the power of New England waned. Already its trade and shipping were passing into the hands of New York. Its population, moving out to the richer agricultural lands of the Middle West, were maintaining all the faults of the Puritan system, the greed, avarice, stiffness, and ugliness, without

the redeeming Puritan mental discipline. Hawthorne was therefore almost the last flower of idealistic New England; the last flower of the old stock that was to produce the first fine fruit of American literature. And like Gogol, Hawthorne was primarily a humorist; but whereas Gogol's humour is lit up by savage hatred (which blazes to a great flame in "Dead Souls," despite Gogol), Hawthorne's humor is made poignant by the nostalgic hopelessness of regret. Behind Gogol's mask is a sneer; behind Hawthorne's face one sees the terrible infinite vanity of all earthly things.

It is instructive in this respect, to compare Hawthorne's finest novel, "The House of Seven Gables," with Gogol's masterpiece, "Dead Souls." Where Gogol adopts a setting that seems to take in its sweep the whole of the Russian landscape, Hawthorne confines his action to the precincts of a single house. Yet in this small compass of space, with the use of barely more than half-a-dozen characters, he conveys the sense of a past stretching back to infinity; a past so remote, awful and unchangeable that the present day of his novel is but a feeble echo of its long-appointed doom. Over this thought of the past, as an event that cannot be recalled or redeemed, Hawthorne returns again and again, as Gogol returns again and again to his motive that the souls of his characters are really dead and can

only be brought to life in the future. The ruin of a people is here summed up in the downfall of a single family within the four walls of a house, as in Gogol the same ruin pursues Chichikov everywhere. Both novels are novels about what are literally "dead souls"—Hepzibah and Clifford and old Uncle Venner and the daguerreotypist Holgrave are as impotent to break the doom that weighs upon them as any of Gogol's landowners. But the doom here is concentrated on a single point, whereas in Gogol it is widespread and diffused.

In his admirable study of Hawthorne, Henry James suggests that the "House of the Seven Gables" is more like a prelude or unfinished sketch for a novel than a complete story. We know that Gogol was unable to finish his novel, though he schemed that Chichikov should be regenerated. Hawthorne did finish his, but the last chapters are an anticlimax after what is the real end; the death of Judge Pyncheon, and the flight of Hepzibah and Clifford. The real end is the railway: "At one moment, they were rattling through a solitude; the next a village had grown up around them; a few breaths more, and it had vanished . . . the spires of meetinghouses seemed set adrift from their foundations; the broad-based hills glided away." This flight into the external world away from the accursed house which held them, is a liberation; it is a

removal without an aim, a complete escape from "what we call real estate—the solid ground to build a house on—which is the broad foundation on which nearly all of the guilt of the world rests." This, and not the weak anticlimax by which the story actually ends, is the real conclusion, so far as there can be any conclusion, in Hawthorne's mind. To get away from property—to get away from land, to own nothing—that is Hawthorne's solution, his magic charm for breaking the spell of the past.

In Gogol's novel, the same flight motive, which Hawthorne introduces with skilful effect as a liberation from the House of Seven Gables, rotting into ruin, is introduced and maintained throughout the story. Chichikov moves hither and thither, forever aimless, forever wandering, seeking to obtain something lasting; a mythical estate, imaginary domain lures him on. He cannot be regenerated until he settles down and heroically transcends his sordid past. Hawthorne's characters cannot be regenerated until they fly away from the past and become nonentities.

4

Here we see in its purest form the workings of that power-land antithesis that we have already described as lying at the root of the contrasted Russian and American psychology. The land on which

Hawthorne's own characters pursue their existence warps their characters; the power that the Russian helplessly desires to achieve, warps the minds not only of Chichikov, but of all the other landowners about him. Hawthorne himself could no more escape his heritage than Gogol. He attempted to escape, in brilliant excursions into folklore, such as "The Scarlet Letter," in faintly objective comedy such as "The Blithedale Romance," finally even in life abroad. But in the end he too had to confess himself beaten. The life of which he was so fine a recorder became more and more a regretful memory of tradition; and meantime the flood of democracy surged irresistibly past him to other aims. Hawthorne could only be outwardly, but not inwardly, a democrat. His political support of Franklin Pierce, and consequent upholding of the rights granted to the Southern States at the time of the making of the Constitution—including the right to hold slaves, and to extend their territory—made him anathema to his own neighbours, the abolitionists, to whom the Mexican War had become a shameful memory, and who were about to give their support to the mad fanatic, John Brown. Hawthorne went abroad after this, where he remained, very indecisive in his attitude and writings till the eve of the Civil War. That event disillusioned him completely. He declared publicly that he considered that John

Brown had been justly hanged; and that the American's allegiance, in the nature of things, was always to one's own native state, rather than to the country as a whole. These remarks, duly deprecated by the editor of the paper in which they appeared, only served to show that Hawthorne was now as much of a disillusioned aristocrat as Gogol had been before him. He died, in a fit of black melancholia, after making several abortive attempts at writing a romance which would deal with the subject of a supposed elixir of life,—attempts which came to nothing. Like Gogol, he was one who had sought for happiness within his own country, and later without, and had found it nowhere; but could not abandon the idea that somewhere there existed a magic talisman that would set things right and make life worth living. Because of the bitter fanaticism of this hope—a hope which Europe from time to time also entertains but always abandons —Gogol and Hawthorne were the first supremely great figures in their national literatures.

Chapter XI

IN the preceding chapter it was necessary, in speaking of Gogol, to make some passing reference to Moscow Slavophilism. It was also hardly possible to speak of Hawthorne without some reference to New England Transcendentalism. These two great currents of thought, though they did not of themselves produce the talent that was attracted to them, were of such importance in the history of Russian and American culture that it is impossible to write a summary of either without some reference to them. It is the more necessary to do so, since these two forces both took their rise from popular mysticism.

Mysticism is a constant factor in the development of any nation. Only in most European countries, especially in Latin and Catholic countries, the aim of the spiritual rulers has been to keep mysticism in check, to give it practical and constructive aims. This has been only possible insofar as the Christian Church has itself assumed the discipline and ordered ranks of the Roman army. The breakdown of discipline before the Reformation led not, as

Catholic historians would have us believe, to any orgy of license, but to an unchecked explosion of popular mysticism. This mysticism did not differ in kind, but only in degree, from the famous mysticism of the Middle Ages. It was less architectural, less social in essence; it depended more and more on an individual and personal approach to God, on what the Catholic critic would call "private judgment." This "private judgment" was not long in invading the Catholic Church itself. Compare for example St. Augustine with Saint Theresa. The former is just as mystical at bottom as the latter; but he constructs his "City of God" objectively, as a refuge for all men. In Saint Theresa, on the other hand, all depends upon personal approach, everything is transformed into a subjective relation between the soul itself and its Maker, and all this has no end, no beginning; it is an ecstasy equally out of time and place. Small wonder that the theologians of Saint Theresa's day thought her doctrine suspect, if not highly heretical.

Transcendentalism is simply a carrying to its logical end of this doctrine of personal and popular mysticism. In New England, for a century and a half before the Revolution, a battle had been waged for the rights of the individual conscience, which had successively been held to be superior to the organised church, to the combined church and state, and

ultimately to the law itself. To the Transcendentalists there remained no longer any barrier between man and God; and Emerson's doctrine of self-reliance as well as his notion of the oversoul, practically said "Let us be God." It is well known how the Emersonian oversoul led directly to the superman of Nietzsche; the only difficulty that the Transcendentalists had in making themselves into supermen was a lack of training. It was suddenly discovered, by whom it does not matter, that the Hindoo ascetics possessed such training. The only sure method therefore of transforming New England yokels and small-town tradesmen into thoroughgoing "oversouls" was to become as Hindoo as possible. Everyone went about reciting the Bhagavad-Gita; and Emerson was able to refer in his Journal to the New England summer as being a "Hindoo day."

It escaped the attention of the Transcendentalists that the Hindoo ascetics whom they strove to imitate had not at all proclaimed the liberty of conscience and the complete right of self-reliance which the Americans asserted. The Hindoo ascetic accepts the idol of the meanest of his compatriots, as authentically representing a god. This the Transcendentalists were not prepared to do. They were individualists, yet so democratic in theory as to suppose that merely by saying to quite ordinary people,

"Here is Emerson; go and make yourself more like him," the ordinary people would all be magically transformed into New England Brahmins. Unfortunately human nature is not like that—as Thoreau, at once the shrewdest and most sincere of the Transcendentalists, admitted.

Transcendentalism was therefore a brilliant pose, and its leaders soon showed its lack of root in reality by upholding the fanatic minority of the abolitionists, as well as by defending the conduct of such born outlaws and desperadoes as John Brown. The same remark may be largely applied to Slavophilism. This movement began as an aristocratic, idealistic, sentimental movement on the part of the more intelligent Moscow nobility to preserve authentic Russian culture against the onslaughts of western European materialism. It therefore had distinct leanings towards the Orthodox Church, and the maintenance of the Czar's power. Unfortunately, the Orthodox Church had become, since Peter the Great, merely another branch of the State bureaucracy, under the control of a Procurator of the Holy Synod, from whom the Patriarch took orders; and the Czar himself had no idea of improving the system, or of helping Russian culture, but only of maintaining his power intact. The Slavophil movement therefore tended to play into the hands of the reactionaries, and its belief in "Holy Russia" was

as much a pose as the belief of the Transcendentalists in Brahmin New England. It nevertheless produced interesting minor figures, notably Aksakov, who presents a curious parallel to Thoreau, which we here lack space to discuss.

These two movements, both mystical in essence, both quasi-oriental in approach—for Slavophilism derives something from Buddhism, as Transcendentalism owes much to Hinduism—produced between them the four greatest geniuses that Russia and America have given to the world. These four geniuses bridged in their life and work the great crises of the sixties; the crisis marked by the Civil War between the States in America, in Russia by the liberation of the serfs, and the tragic reign of Alexander II. The value of these four great men, and still more their failure, give us more than a merely political and social picture of their respective epochs, a true insight into the measure of the problems that Russia and America were given to contend with. We will take the two men who made the more objective approach to these problems first: Walt Whitman and Leo Tolstoy.

It is utterly impossible to treat Tolstoy and Whitman apart for the purposes of this study. Both were so completely and aboriginally a part of their country in outlook that neither resembles anything whatsoever European. Tolstoy's natural

view of European art and culture was that everything in it was artificial, morbid, false, and above all, sexually provocative—and Whitman persisted throughout his lifetime in the error that European art simply glorified the airs and trappings of outworn feudalism. Both turned away from an elaborate and complex culture to the simplest native elements they could find; in Whitman the dock-labourers, stage-drivers, longshoremen, and common workmen, and in Tolstoy the shrewd and simple Kutuzov, the Cossack bandit, the peasant saint. Apart from the fact that Whitman wrote in a rhythmical poetry that was to be like no other poetry ever conceived, having nothing of the stock poetical touches, the heightened style of the old masterpieces, alternating from a direct realism to a vague and incoherent mysticism, while Tolstoy wrote in a prose that at its best is unparalleled for direct powers of keen observation, and at its worst is dry and tedious like a Government report—apart from this fact, Whitman and Tolstoy present precisely the same problem to the critical intelligence. Both were divinely gifted amateurs, natures of immense animal vitality and range of experience, imbued with a perpetual itch for self-expression; pioneers and path-breakers of an art that was to be at once popular and folk-art, and yet was to disdain all the background of mythological fantasy

on which folk-art ultimately rests, and remain cold, clear, and rational. They combined together in two unique and practically interchangeable individualities the most elemental and earthern mysticism of the unspoilt savage, and the completely practical aim of the modern scientific philanthropist.

There are, it is true, certain minor and slight differences between them. Neither, despite their intense nationalism, was racially completely assimilated to the country in which he lived and worked. Tolstoy's ancestry goes back to a Baltic, possibly East Prussian strain; Whitman, as is well known, had Dutch blood in his veins. This slight foreign element perhaps explains the self-centred aloofness of either from the main intellectual current of their times. The idealistic Orthodoxy of the Slavophil movement made no appeal to Tolstoy; and Whitman, after a period in which he came under the direct influence of Emerson, threw overboard Transcendentalism, with its insistence on scholarship and intellectual culture. One may say also that Whitman's best work was all done before his breakdown in 1872, was in fact done by the time of the close of the Civil War in 1865, while Tolstoy's best work was all done after that date down to his death. This was to a certain extent due to the fact that Whitman was by nine years the elder, but also due to the working of social and personal factors that it will

be part of our task to examine. Apart from this, and apart from some minor differences such as the fact that Whitman's was fundamentally a feminine nature, glorifying sex theoretically as a biological function, but in practice apt to dwell almost to the point of mawkish morbidity on the magnetic charm of athletic masculinity, while Tolstoy was so profoundly masculine as to despise women utterly and yet to be always swayed by their sexual attractiveness—apart from this purely personal divergence, the two forces in their literary resultant, are interchangeable. Each represents an unalterable granitic insensitive residue of final perception, at war with all outside influences, rejecting every European refinement, and struggling to spread itself over the world. These two, Tolstoy and Whitman, stand alone in the history of their country's thought as neither barbarians nor decadents, but something far more elemental. They were essentially backwoodsmen.

Both had what is only common to the backwoodsman and the savage: absolutely Adamic vision. If we can suppose a stage in human consciousness when man is not subjective, does not project his longings into the past or the future, is not concerned with what follows upon death or what is the purpose of life, lets reason follow upon impulse without any ulterior speculation as to whether rea-

son is adequate to explain, or impulse adequate to guide his effort—if we can suppose such a stage, then Tolstoy and Whitman both stood in it from the beginning. Whitman has marvellously described this stage in his poem "There Was a Child Went Forth," and Tolstoy in a passage of his autobiography, and to this stage they both returned again and again. Both stood on the same level of undifferentiated animal consciousness. The intellectual development of both was fragmentary, the spiritual evolution always at the mercy of some catastrophic "conversion." What Tolstoy describes himself as being at twenty he remained at fifty, and the Whitman of the earliest "Leaves of Grass" is the same Whitman that wrote "Specimen Days" twenty years later. To live in this fashion is extremely difficult under modern civilised conditions, and Tolstoy might have easily passed through a physical breakdown similar to that which cut short Whitman's career, had he not married an able and efficient woman, and been the inheritor of a large estate. For the Adamic vision, as I have described it, neither looks at things with the practical materialistic vision of most modern men, nor at them with the idealistic vision of the minority. It sees at once both sides, and neither. To it a tree is not only a symbol of grateful shade, greenness and eternal retreat from men, but also so much mere wood to be

cut down and burnt, and ultimately only a tree. The civilised man sees now one side, now the other; the primitive man, the true Adamite sees both.

It would be very easy to show how passage after passage in Tolstoy's work corresponds with other passages in Whitman's work in this quality of Adamic vision. One need only contrast the horse race in "Anna Karenina," the battle-fields or the burning of Moscow in "War and Peace," or that marvellous scene (also in "Anna Karenina") where the peasants mow the grass, and the proprietor of the fields takes part in their labour, with many a passage out of Whitman—the superb description of late afternoon in "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," the passage beginning "I am the mashed fireman with breast-bone broken" in "Song of Myself," the completely captured sense of flight in "To the Man-of-War-Bird," the amazing rhythm and pulse of the sea-shore in "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking," and many another poem. These two men were so completely innocent and indifferent as regards intellectual aspirations and metaphysical struggles that when confronted with nature in its grandest and simplest aspects (which too is innocent and indifferent) they at once felt at home, and gave us not "nature seen through a temperament," so much as nature itself.

It is important also in this connection to note

that both possessed a supreme power of painting war. Whitman doubtless inherited a dislike of war from his Quaker ancestry, and Tolstoy certainly opposed war theoretically as being contrary to his favourite doctrine of non-resistance. Yet it was precisely these two non-resisters who gave us the most supreme war documents that we possess. The battle scenes in "War and Peace" are unmatched in all literature except by Whitman's own "Drum-Taps." Nor is there anything strange in this. To the non-resistant, the man whose soul has learned a wise passivity, the upholder of "vegetable life," such as Whitman and Tolstoy were, war is simply the spectacle of nature seen at its highest moment: casually beautiful, unconsciously cruel, monotonous, arbitrary, heedless of both good and evil. It is the logician, the metaphysician, who escapes from this viewpoint and regards war as purposive action, or as purposeless savagery. Neither Whitman nor Tolstoy were able to take this attitude. To both war remained a Dionysiac orgy of nature, in which they were able to merge their own passivity, and neither had the slightest notion of the aims for which the side to which they happened not to be attached was fighting for. Whitman supposed that the North in the Civil War was fighting nothing but the "southern slave power," forgetting that the ranks of the South were filled not by mercenaries

(which every slave-power supports) but by free mountaineers in butternut homespun, who had never owned a slave in their lives, were utterly undisciplined in their ideas of freedom, and loved the cause of local independence more than their lives; while the northern armies increasingly became full of conscripted German and Irish immigrants without the remotest attachment to their adopted country. And Tolstoy equally marred the whole plan of his "War and Peace" with a portrait of Napoleon that is nothing but spiteful and partisan caricature —he makes Napoleon little short of idiotic, forgetting utterly that the Napoleon who crossed the Russian frontier was a Napoleon who had acquired the fatal habit of hesitation—extremely common in Russia—and that the army he led had equally acquired the habit of indiscipline—another Russian trait.

2

But this is not the place for a complete estimate of these two great men. Otherwise, we would be obliged to take into account the fact that Tolstoy began as a psychological analyst, and progressed through ever broader objectivity to his final transformation into a moral feuilletonist, while Whitman exactly reversed the process. Our object here is a more difficult one; to examine the type of mind

likely to be produced by such frontier civilisations as America and Russia, and thereby to estimate their influence on other minds. The problem is psychological and social, rather than cultural and literary. Therefore we must pass on from the great achievements of these two men to the narrower and more purely personal foundations of æsthetic theory on which those achievements rested.

The aim of the Transcendentalists was to transform native New England independence of character into something culturally significant by interfusing it with pantheistic mysticism derived alike from Hindu and American Indian sources. The aim of the Slavophils was to exalt the primitive folk culture and institutions of the Russian peasant by similarly emphasising its mystic and Orthodox Christian side. The one rested on the zemstvo of the Russian village; the other on the New England town meeting. Each was in fact nothing more than a theory based upon the assumption that the Russian, or American, was as such superior to the European.

To this theory Whitman and Tolstoy responded by making a practical experiment. What they said in effect was this:—"You say the ordinary bark-shoed peasant, the ordinary New England backwoodsman, is capable of finer shades of feeling than any that Europe can show. Very well then. We

will be respectively in our lives a backwoodsman and a peasant, and thereby transform ourselves into the greatest artists of our country."

Viewed from this standpoint Whitman's "Democratic Vistas" and his Preface to the first edition of "Leaves of Grass" are the most important of his writings, as Tolstoy's "What is Art?" and his later polemics are the most important of his. Both artists started from themselves, and tried to deduce a general law from a particular instance. Whitman's proposition (to take that first) was, if we disengage it from the vague phraseology in which he chose to wrap it, as follows:—

"America differs from anything either European or Asiatic in the fact that it is politically entirely a democracy. Yet this democracy will never come to anything unless it produces forms of art, literature, religion to correspond to its native institutions. These forms of art can only grow on this soil, in their appropriate atmosphere, and to make them grow I will produce poems such as I think any democratic person can truly read and enjoy. These works or works akin in spirit to them must become, in the future, the perfect canons of form."

To this specious plea American democracy responded by twice prosecuting Whitman's work for alleged indecency; by almost literally starving him to death—if he had not been maintained by special

European financial support after his breakdown in 1872, this starvation might have been an accomplished fact—and by neglecting him in his life and afterwards. It is true that Whitman took compensation in his last years by surrounding himself with a small group of adulators who went to the extent of comparing him to Buddha and Christ. But his own work and his life suffered. If he had not mistakenly thought his own message (with all its blunders) more important than any life he might live, he might perhaps have married Mrs. Gilchrist or another, and have recovered strength enough to give us a second masterpiece, equal to "Leaves of Grass." His achievement, with its very human traits, has suffered woefully from being concealed in the clouds of incense cast to heaven by a tiny minority of Whitman-idolaters. As a matter of fact, not one in ten thousand or a hundred thousand Americans is ever able to get anything out of his poetry, or to realise that his theory is anything but an utter confusion of art and morals. Whitman has had no successor in his own country, and the chief influence of his work has been abroad.

Tolstoy's problem was very similar. He, too, as a combination of mystic and rationalist, set himself the task of practically realising the programme of Slavophilism; but the path he had to pursue to this end was in itself very different from that which the

Slavophils followed. He had first of all to forget the fact that he was born a landowner, with all the caste prejudices and conservative impulses of the agricultural nobility; and he had to become as nearly as possible, inwardly and outwardly a peasant. It took Tolstoy a long time, and in the end left him with a much clearer, albeit a more radical message, than Whitman. This message he sets out in his famous "What is Art?"

The basis of Tolstoy's æsthetics is contained in the following sentences:— "Art is a human activity consisting in this, that one man consciously, by means of certain external signs, hands on to others feelings that he has lived through, and that others are infected by these feelings and also experience them." And further "Art is not, as the metaphysicians say, the manifestation of some mysterious idea of beauty or of God; it is not, as the æsthetic physiologists say, a game in which man lets off his excess of stored-up energy; it is not the expression of man's emotion by external signs, it is not the production of pleasing objects, and, above all, it is not pleasure; but it is a means of union among men, joining them together in the same feelings and indispensable for the life and progress towards well-being of individuals and of humanity."

It is worth noting, in regard to the first part of this definition, that apparently an art which has

ceased to infect humanity with its feelings, has ceased to become art in Tolstoy's eyes. Let us take for example the well-known example of Cretan art. Undoubtedly, this was art, and infected people with its feelings at one time. The Cretan civilisation however perished, and remained unknown till the late nineteenth century. During all this time, the Cretans according to Tolstoy's definition, were not artists since their art infected no one with its feelings. Suddenly, after Sir Arthur Evans' discoveries the Cretans became artists again. In other words, Tolstoy takes the capacity of art to influence others for good or ill, for art itself. Precisely the same mistake was made by Whitman. He too supposed that poetry, simply because it was poetry, would have the capacity to breed a "huskier race of orators and bards," would unite America in "the manly love of comrades," would even be eugenic in its effect of producing the ideally perfect type of woman. The error in both cases is rather like that of a man who has mistaken the programme of a concert for the effect of the music upon him.

But there is still a more serious error behind Tolstoy's doctrine. He declares, in revolt against the "art for art's sake" doctrine fashionable in his time, that "art is a means for union among men, joining them together in the same feelings." He might have reflected that the only art that had his-

torically done so was, like the cathedral-art of the Middle Ages, rooted entirely in a religious doctrine accepted by all ranks of society, and it was this religious and moral doctrine, and not the quality of the work itself, that made it "a means for union among men." But Tolstoy in his rationalistic fervour, had already rejected the mystical solution of the Orthodox faith, and unlike Whitman, did not hope to replace the older attitude towards religion with any new outlook. Consequently he argued that art which did not teach human unity and brotherhood was not art at all, and devoted himself to demolishing Shakespeare and Wagner, the nineteenth century Frenchmen, and ultimately his own best work. He tried to transform art into a moral tract for peasant consumption; and supposed that unless he became a peasant himself, he could not any longer be an artist. The error was enormous. It is not by wearing bast shoes and plowing one's own fields that one acquires the range of power and feeling necessary to create an epic like "War and Peace" or the "Iliad." To behave as Tolstoy did, is simply to mistake the outward means of life for its end in inner spirituality. A Saint Francis, a Lao-Tze, could cast away the whole apparatus of luxury and vanity and remain great artists, because the feeling of such men remained on the same plane of transcendental human understanding as that of

Beethoven or of Shakespeare. But Tolstoy did not ultimately understand or share anyone's feelings but his own, and he made war incessantly upon his own nature. Therefore he drew upon himself Dostoevsky's profound criticism that he was like "an animal who runs in a certain direction till he has to turn his head, and cannot do so without turning his entire body, and running in the opposite direction." And the profound criticism of Whitman is to be found in the writings of a Southerner, Lanier, who remarked that just because the Mississippi River or Niagara Falls were great, Whitman thought he could become equally great by writing about them.

3

Whitman and Tolstoy both failed in their aims, but Whitman's enforced admission of failure wrung from him in the end an attitude that is more attractive, humanly speaking, than Tolstoy's final inhuman rejection of all human contact. It was fortunate, however, that both died before they saw the inevitable end to which their theories led. Whitman's glorification of the average American, instead of the rare exception, developed a race of human beings of which Mr. Sinclair Lewis' "Babbitt" is the type; the completely self-satisfied, idea-hating, greedy and noisily vulgar herd-man of the

Middle West, without æsthetic imagination or spiritual depth of any kind. Tolstoy's ideal of a peasant aristocracy no less in the end developed the "kulak," becoming familiar to us since the Bolshevist accession to power:—the peasant who having made his bargain with the community, becomes so inert and rooted in his power that he will not even grow a grain of corn more than is necessary to feed himself, nor acquire the education that is offered him beyond the extent that his own interests dictate. The two types closely resemble each other and we may have more to say about them. For the present it is enough to observe that Tolstoy and Whitman sacrificed their lives and strength and talents (which were not small ones) towards the establishment of states of society and of human types that, if either were alive to-day, they would be the first to reject. The reason why this result came about was due, however, not to some personal fault of their own, but to mistaken premises on the part of great masses of their own countrymen. The Transcendentalists had exalted self-reliance, which in the end comes down to a bare personal preference by which the Philistine is the equal of the artist and above all social discipline. Whitman simply led this hypothesis to its natural conclusion. The Slavophils had mistaken the rooted inertia and conservatism of the peasant for a su-

perior spiritual faith; Tolstoy showed that this faith could not subsist on the same terms as the faith that had produced the masterpieces of higher culture. Each made what was essentially the same mistake. Both overlooked the fact that we cannot make man better, or nobler, or happier in the last resort—we cannot lift life above the level on which it stands—merely by multiplying the common denominator of the needs and desires of humanity.

Chapter XII

THE Civil War in America and Alexander Second's freeing of the serfs in Russia, which took place at the same time, were very different in their effect upon the two countries. The Civil War, as the most intelligent of the Transcendentalists, Thoreau and Hawthorne, foresaw, was not likely to turn out into a victory of New England mysticism over Southern rationalism and materialism. The desperate gallantry and lost-cause chivalry with which the South flung itself into the struggle and maintained it for the first two years, soon disabused everyone but the politicians. The real balance of power lay with the northern industrialists, busily making munitions and army equipment, and with the population of the yet unformed border communities of Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas. After 1862 the victory, if victory was to be won, would fall with its spoils, not to the abolitionists (the most honest of whom, William Lloyd Garrison, was in favor of letting the South go) nor to the small group of learned and cultivated New Englanders, but to the steel magnates of Pennsyl-

vania, the squatter immigrants of the prairie, rapidly building Chicago, their true capital, where the name of Emerson was unknown. The Civil War was the first heavy defeat for American culture, and it is doubtful if America has ever completely recovered from it. Coming as it did, before either the North or the South had reached their fullest mental development, and while the West was still mentally and physically undeveloped, it only transferred power to the frontier and provided another episode in the progressive decentralisation and deculturisation of America.

Far otherwise was it at the other end of the scale. Alexander's action in liberating the serfs, and his own liberal tendencies, sent a wave of hope over everyone in Russia, and not least over the Slavophils. Their programme was about to be accomplished. The next twenty years following 1860 is the richest and most remarkable period in Russian literature until we reach the period that beginning about 1900, covers the present day. During this time not only Tolstoy did his best work, which we have already dealt with, but these years also covered the entire mature achievement of another great Russian, who in his absolute uniqueness as a spiritual force, surpasses even Tolstoy: Feodor Dostoevsky. One of the few figures that we can remotely set beside him (and that we can do so even

remotely is a fact in itself of some significance) is that of his American contemporary Herman Melville.

There can be little basis for comparison between the outward careers of the son of the poor Russian doctor (with Volhynian, perhaps remote Polish blood in his veins) who came to St. Petersburg at the age of twenty-two to make a literary sensation with his first story, and who, three years later, having taken part in meetings of a group of young Socialists of markedly westernizing tendencies, was sent off to penal servitude in Siberia, where he remained for ten years; and the life of the scion of two of the proudest and most aristocratic of American colonial families, who became stricken with poverty at twelve, ran away to sea, tried schoolteaching for three years, shipped aboard a whaler at twenty-two, returned at twenty-four, married, poured out literary work for about ten years, and relapsed again into the silence of complete oblivion for over twenty years. When one adds the detail that Dostoevsky's period of imprisonment and exile in Siberia very nearly corresponds to Melville's sole period of creative work (1849-1859 in Dostoevsky's case, and 1847-1856 in Melville's) one realises that neither time nor space can be used as a basis of comparison. The true comparison lies inward: in the unique spiritual torment, the unsatisfied thirst

for perfection that made Dostoevsky and Melville what they were.

In the history of every great nation there comes a time when the need of men to find what may be called the Golden Age becomes acute. This search for the ideal, as it influences literature, is often attacked by modern literary critics under the name of Romanticism. Nevertheless nineteenth century Romanticism has very little in common with this particular striving, which probably affected the Greeks just when they touched high-water mark in the fifth century, certainly was present with the Romans from Virgil onwards, and woke again with the first stirrings of the Italian Renaissance. It seems as if man cannot create his highest flights of beauty and imagination without the longing for some marvellous Utopia to be finally achieved to lure him on. In the case of the English race, the prospect and aspiration towards this Golden Age in dream and in reality spanned the age of the Tudors, and Shakespeare speaks its last farewell in "The Tempest's" air-borne music. To the Americans and the Russians the hope of a new birth, arising from the ashes of the past, had existed as we have seen, from the beginning; but their literature had been born prematurely old and disillusioned in regard to what was the faith, not of the cultured few, but the majority. Hawthorne had

turned away from the life of his epoch to brood on the shapes evoked for him by ancestral memories. Gogol had, after a brief attempt to show the heroic past in its tragic splendor, turned aside to acridly and bitterly satirize the present. But the forces of Transcendentalism and Slavophilism had shown that however evil the present might be, life and literary work would be impossible in Russia and America, without hope and trust in the future. This hope Tolstoy and Whitman tried to turn into hard, rational, everyday reality. Melville and Dostoevsky on the other hand were not concerned with what was practical reality—their aspirations were too great for that—but with the vaster if more indefinite world of human hearts and souls. They sought to go beyond the gospel of Transcendentalism and Slavophilism into a search for the ultimate perfection of the human type.

2

Feodor Michaelovitch Dostoevsky was born on October 30, 1821, at Moscow. His father was an army doctor, who combined in his life the vices of alcoholism and of avarice. The family was well-to-do, and possessed estates in the country, together with a certain number of serfs, but the elder Dostoevsky (who had many of the characteristics of old

Karamazov) not only denied his family support, but behaved in such an insupportable manner towards his own peasants, that while on a visit to one of his estates, he was smothered by the serfs with the cushions of his own carriage. This tragic event haunted Dostoevsky through all his later life. About the mother (who appears to have been an ineffectual, harmless personage) we know little. Young Dostoevsky was sent with his brother to St. Petersburg at twenty-one, to join the Government Corps of Engineers, but soon abandoned this to take up writing. Already he was afflicted with a mild form of epilepsy, which was aggravated by his disorderly and riotous mode of existence. His first novel, "Poor Folk," created a mild sensation; the "literature of pity," the sentimental novel of the Dickens type was in the air, and Dostoevsky's work was of the sort to please the public taste. He became acquainted with Belinsky and Nekrassov, the leading critic and poet of the time, and was hailed as the true heir of Gogol's tradition. He soon became familiar with the advanced literary circles, which were extremely radical in politics, and this led to his downfall. He joined the political group of one Petrachevsky where the questions of constitutional government on the English model, abolition of serfdom, and freedom of the press were ardently debated. The whole group was arrested,

and after having the death-sentence passed on them, were led into the prison yard to be executed, when a messenger came forward announcing that this sentence had been commuted to imprisonment and exile in Siberia. There Dostoevsky remained for ten years, till 1859.

It was not until after his return to Russia, and after his marriage which took place in Siberia had proved a total failure, and after a violent and lacerating love affair with a demoniacal and coldly proud woman, that Dostoevsky found himself as a writer. The book in which he found himself, though it has not the fame of the greater novels, is in reality the key to his life and thought. It is called "Memories from the Underground," and was written in 1862. It was followed by "Crime and Punishment," "The Idiot," "The Gambler," "The Possessed" (to give it its English title; the Russian title is, properly speaking, "Devils"), and "The Brothers Karamazov." During these later years, Dostoevsky's life was not less harrowing than during the earlier. His second marriage, with a young unspoilt girl who was devoted to him, gave him some happiness, but his later years were harassed by constant money troubles, and from 1867 to 1874 he had to live abroad, as a penniless bankrupt. This state of affairs was further aggravated by a mania for gambling which possessed him, and by his epileptic

seizures, now grown acute. His complete break with the Western liberals of his youth, and his whole-hearted adoption of a mysticism resting on Orthodoxy, alienated his early friends; and the Slavophils with whose doctrines he now sympathised were repelled by his rudeness of manner, his contempt for good society, and a sort of masked anarchism that they perceived in him. Nevertheless, his "Brothers Karamazov," which appeared in the year before his death, made Dostoevsky popular, and his Pushkin address, delivered a few months before the end, was a sort of apotheosis. He died suddenly, as the result of an aggravated quarrel with some relatives over money affairs, early in 1881.

Dostoevsky's thought may be thus summarized: The human soul was to him of incommunicable, unique value. And not only the human soul of the higher ranks of society, but that of the lower, the "injured and oppressed," those who had been warped and embittered by the world and by man. Dostoevsky knew well that he was such a warped individual, and that nothing could heal him except some miracle of divine and earthly harmony. This miracle could only be brought about by the production of some superior human type, who would at once be "master of the world," a superman and yet one who sympathised and understood the lowest

and most degraded of men. But the trouble was that such types, the Father Zossimas, the Alyosha Karamazovs, the Prince Myshkins, stood aloof from the world and innocent of its temptations, they were ineffectual pure fools, and in the world's eyes, "Idiots." On the other hand the world, and Russia in particular (in whose destiny Dostoevsky forced himself to believe with the anguished fervor of one who had been made to suffer by it, and yet who had no other country) was likely to progress in the exactly opposite direction and to produce the anti-Christian "superman," the serene monster, cold-bloodedly dabbling in ultimate iniquity. Dostoevsky's major work is a vast descent into the abyss of human perversion, at the bottom of which stood hell, like a "cold bathhouse filled with spiders." If Tolstoy was as Adam before the fall, Dostoevsky was Adam after.

Herman Melville, on the other hand, was born in the inner circle of America's colonial aristocracy. His father, a descendant of English landowners and Revolutionary patriots, travelled abroad as a young man, was highly cultivated for his time, but allowed the family fortune to slip through his fingers. He died when Melville was only twelve years old, leaving his family bankrupt. His mother, a cold, proud, and essentially selfish descendant of the most notable of the colonial Dutch settlers who had

rallied to Washington's side, did nothing to mitigate the poverty of her family, and at the age of seventeen, Melville shipped before the mast as a common seaman on a voyage to Liverpool. This voyage, later described in "Redburn," seems to have opened Melville's eyes to the cruelty and injustice of the world. He returned after a painful experience as a penniless waif in England, to America, and tried school teaching for a number of years. Meanwhile he was writing, desultorily and badly. In 1840, when twenty-one years of age, he again, in a fit of desperation, went to sea, this time on a whale ship bound to the South Seas. How he deserted his ship at the Marquesas, lived for a time with cannibals, returned to Tahiti, saw the inside of a jail, and finally became a common seaman aboard an American man-of-war which brought him back to his native country, is all fully told in his first two books "Typee, "Omoo," and their later successor "White Jacket." The return to America in 1846 enabled Melville to devote himself to literature, and his first book "Typee," recounting his adventures in the Marquesas, made a sensation in England and America, being a "success of scandal" in the latter country on account of certain passages not complimentary to the missionaries in the South Seas. After writing its successor, "Omoo," Melville married. The marriage, with a woman of

wealth and position, brought only further disillusionment, as it is apparent that Elizabeth Shaw, daughter of the Chief Justice of Massachusetts, had neither imagination nor tact to sympathise with her husband's work nor his sensitive temperament. A family of children soon engrossed her, and Melville was forced to struggle on alone in the effort to support not only his wife, but his mother (who despised him heartily) and his wife's sister as well. There followed in rapid succession, "Mardi" (1848), "Redburn" (1848) and "White Jacket" (1849) written to support his waning fortunes. In 1849, he went to England, which had begun to take very favourable notice of his work, and he might have become there a minor literary lion, but family concerns, and perhaps also his own aloof independence of spirit, soon recalled him. The first fruits of his return were "Moby Dick" and "Pierre," the two masterpieces of the mature Melville. A disastrous fire at his publishers which destroyed the plates of his works, the hostility of the reviewers to "Pierre," Hawthorne's defection from friendship, the increasing lack of understanding of his own family, and ill-health, all conspired to embitter him. After one or two further attempts, and a second trip abroad on which he wrote the poem "Clarel," which could not even find a publisher, Melville retired from the field. His last years were spent as col-

lector of the customs of the port of New York, where he died in 1891. His death passed absolutely unnoticed, and it is only in the last decade that he has begun to emerge into the fame that life denied him.

Melville's work began as a continuation of the adventure story as practised by Cooper. "Typee" and "Omoo" are largely what they purport to be; a sublimation of actual experience of a white man amongst strange countries and savage peoples with a considerable dash of idyllic and exotic colouring. But Melville's attitude towards the savages of the South Seas (to which he came, be it noted, after the disillusionment and shattering of early romantic hopes recounted in "Redburn") was very different from the skilled idealisation of the remote practised by Cooper. He was the first man to ask himself and others the question, "If this savage life is so much more rational and sensible than Christianity, why pretend to be Christian?"—a question to which to this day there has remained no answer. Thus he early became profoundly suspicious of the virtues of his own countrymen, while at the same time (like Dostoevsky) he knew himself innately bound to his own country by unbreakable ties. He thus affirms the sole achievement that Christianity really has to its credit, the conquest of the world by democracy, while at the same time his eyes are open

to all the evil done daily in the world in the name of democracy. This profound division of self, this inner warping grew up early in him, and the struggle was but intensified by his boyish adoration of his selfish, purse-proud, and beautiful mother, which turned to disgust after his father's death. Thus he interjected into the sea-story elements which had nothing whatever to do with realistic experience; elements derived from his profound knowledge of the ways of humanity, intensified by his own loneliness and aloofness from mankind. Very early he seems to have traversed the waste of German metaphysics, and to have become a transcendentalist, if not before Emerson, at least coeval with Hawthorne. Each of the major novels, "Redburn," "White Jacket," "Moby Dick," "Mardi," is less the description of an actual voyage than a terrible allegoric record of spiritual defeat and despair. Even "Redburn," the one most based perhaps on actual experience, is haunted by the figure of Jackson, a vision of pure unadulterated evil; and the two last are desperate flights of imagination away from the world. In all his best work, except "Pierre," Melville makes us walk a ship's deck, which should be the breeding ground of the most mystic whole-hearted democracy on earth, and in every line and passage he shows us how this fair scene, seen from within man's soul, is only hell.

3

It is customary among literary critics to devote attention to Melville's remarkable style, and to stress the point that Dostoevsky's major novels are nothing but glorified detective stories. It is true that Melville possessed a style that in its measured eloquence was the equal and sometimes the superior of his models, De Quincey and Sir Thomas Browne, and that—at its best—makes the style of Hawthorne shrivel into insignificance. It is true also that all of Dostoevsky's great works centre about a commonplace murder, and that he uses the most elementary devices of suspense and horror to heighten our interest about this murder. But the significant thing is that neither Melville's long purple passages, surcharged with descriptive power, by which he makes you see every detail of his scenes in an unearthly light, nor Dostoevsky's interminable hysteric conversations, in which each of his characters tries in turn to lay bare the inmost criminal secret of his or her soul, are anything more than skilful devices to set out the heart of the subject, which is in both cases the complete, candid, and terribly disillusioned revelation of the workings of the naked and helplessly-entangled human soul. Both carried pure character-creation to a point beyond that which any other writer has attempted,

except perhaps Shakespeare in "Hamlet"; and both, like Shakespeare in "Hamlet," were obsessed by their characters, and obsessed above all by the "mystery of iniquity," the infinite perversion and moral deformity of humankind.

It is possible to show how this is so only by a direct comparison of the masterpiece of both men. "The Brothers Karamazov" is outwardly, at least, the story of the murder of a wealthy landowner by his sons. But a moment's examination of the character of old Karamazov, the landowner in question, will convince us that no such man as old Karamazov could possibly exist in actual flesh. He transcends all human limitations. He is not only a coarse wine-bibber, and an avaricious miser with his money, like Dostoevsky's own father, but an unbridled sensualist, a cynic, a sentimentalist, and a buffoon—none of which Dostoevsky's father ever was. He is, in short, an encyclopædia of all Russian vices, is in fact, a symbol of that Old Russia which Dostoevsky saw had to be put to death. And as such, he triumphs in life and death over his sons. The oldest, Ivan, who is also the noblest, sees his faith in God and man destroyed by the monstrous conduct of his father, and goes insane; the second, Dmitri, follows a crooked path of sensuality and sentimentality, but is redeemed by some traits of generosity for which he has to suffer; the youngest

of all, Alyosha, fancies that he has gained redemption and become "a new man" by entering a monastery, but in the end has to admit that he too is in essence "Karamazov." The actual murder is consummated by Smerdyakov, the unacknowledged offspring of Karamazov himself and a gutter-drab; he hangs himself, and Dmitri has to suffer the penalty. The end of the book leaves Dostoevsky questioning alike human and divine justice; there is no solution, except perhaps in suffering, and the shout of "Hurrah for Karamazov!" with which the story closes, may conceal an even deadlier irony.

Melville's "Moby Dick" is very different as regards setting, but its import is even more clear. Here we have what purports to be the story of a whaling-cruise. But in fact the story from beginning to end is pure allegory, thinly disguised with masses of irrelevant detail about whales and whaling. Moby Dick, the White Whale, whose killing is the special aim of the ship's cruise, is nothing but a symbol: a symbol of the unearthly, unconquerable, superhuman—and after all is said and done, strangely beautiful—power of evil. He exists in every sea of the world, but it is precisely in the "Pacific," in the heart of a noonday calm, that he is found. He has been sighted before, but never without disaster; has been hunted by others, but has always escaped. Captain Ahab, master of the

ship that is now seeking him, has been disabled by him, in a previous encounter, having lost one leg. This Captain Ahab is Melville's symbol of the human will in its highest and most courageous aspect; the human will that, not having been able to conquer evil by fair means, in direct battle, now strives to do so by unhallowed ones. By a stroke of superb genius, Melville makes him master even of the souls of simple savages; his three chief harpooners are respectively a South Sea Islander, a Negro, and an American Indian. His control over his three mates, all of whom represent some shade of manly courage, is also practically absolute. Moby Dick is duly hunted, and destroys the ship and Ahab alike in a scene whose magnificence of prose and mounting terror alike have no parallel in anything written by man. The only person who has foreseen the inevitable tragedy is an idiot boy, to whom no one pays attention; the only one who survives it is the outcast, Ishmael, who tells the story.

Here, too, the parallel with Shakespeare is inevitable. As Dostoevsky recalls "Hamlet," and in part "Othello," so Melville recalls the Shakespeare of "Macbeth" and "King Lear." If we can suppose a Lear endowed with superhuman force, who instead of wandering out upon the heath and raving, feeds his insanity with the steady thought of

revenge, and at last sets out, backed by others, to accomplish it, we get in this Lear a complete picture of Ahab. He is undaunted, so long as his ship lasts, ready to match weapons with God Himself. Only when his ship goes down before the battering onrush of the superhuman power behind Moby Dick does Ahab momentarily give way; and then but to recover and hurl another unavailing harpoon at his antagonist. Ship and captain alike go down in the struggle, and the last thing seen is a topmast pennon floating above the waters, with a sky-hawk entangled in its folds: "And so the bird of heaven with his whole captive form enfolded in the flag of Ahab, went down with his ship which, like Satan, would not sink to hell till she had dragged a living part of heaven along with her, and helmeted herself in it." "Then all collapsed and the great shroud of the sea rolled on as it rolled five thousand years ago." To the problem of evil Melville has no more an answer, then, than Dostoevsky. He can but suggest that if evil conquers, it is so much the worse for God who lets evil conquer; a solution to which Dostoevsky might have answered in the words of Kirillov in "The Possessed," that God in that case was dead, and man must become God. That Melville adds his favourite tag "all is vanity," to this conclusion would seem to Dostoevsky an impertinence. "We have to live nevertheless," he might

have retorted; a fact poor Melville often neglected to take into account.

Before Melville arrived at this conclusion, that the world was more evil than good, he too had striven to portray the ideal human type of his dreams. Jack Chase in "White Jacket" (who is significantly made an Englishman) is the apotheosis of Melville's type; the bluff, hearty, pleasant Anglo-Saxon blend of Pagan and Puritan. Perhaps it was his own wavering between England and America (where the bluff, hearty, pleasant type is but too frequently in practice a hypocrite and a bully to boot) that made Melville select for his life's loyalty, this sort of being, and not continue his search into the deeper waters of the human soul; certainly it was his own reticent prudery in sexual matters—a prudery not shared by the great Russian with whom his name is here linked—that made him hesitate before what must have been the final statement of his problem. What that statement might have been, "Pierre" exists to show; Melville in the end meant to portray evil as seductive but ruinous, and good as purely negative and helpless. The public would have none of this, and Melville decided to keep silent about the dangerous secret of his own philosophy. That he did not continue to write was America's second great disaster in the field of culture; following on the Civil War, it was a double

fatality scarcely paralleled elsewhere, and certainly not in Russia. But in his transformation of the realistic adventure story into the "allegory of Good and Evil" Melville perhaps pointed the way to American authors as yet unborn.

Chapter XIII

THE last chapter of our study of the two literatures—Russian and American—has, in its study of four great figures, brought the story to a climax. Nothing is more characteristic of the mental history of the two countries than the way in which under Whitman and Tolstoy, Dostoevsky and Melville, the whole problem of democracy in relation to art, and the whole problem of human aspiration in its strife with evil, was examined and investigated. But the generation that followed was not able to profit by their example. The great climax was succeeded by an anti-climax; and Russian literature, no less than American literature, after the seventies, assumes the picture of a sterile and uncultivated plain.

This state of affairs was due to the operation of social and economic causes. The great reforms adopted in Russia by Alexander II to signalise his advent to the throne were halted; first, by an attempt at assassination made in 1866; second, by the sort of advance *en masse* which always takes place in Russian history after a period of increasing in-

ternal peace and prosperity. The surplus population of released serfs and discontented landowners now swarmed east across the Urals and opened up the whole of the fertile lands of Siberia to the borders of Mongolia. This expansion was followed by the usual reaction in the shape of a war with Russia's old enemy Turkey (1877); a war in which Russia gained nothing, and which disillusioned everybody, including even the Slavophils.

The course of events in America was not essentially different. The close of the Civil War marked an enormous expansion of the American territory westward, and the whole region, from the foothills of the Rockies to the Sierras and beyond to the Pacific became inhabited. The first transcontinental railway was built in the shape of the Missouri Pacific; and the period of the seventies was a period of furious speculation, of fierce political tension, of steady industrial growth and agricultural expansion. In this "Gilded Age" of America's new-won prosperity, the question of a native culture and of the fine arts were largely lost sight of. The only part of the country that resisted the general drive towards increasing economic and industrial development was the South, and that lay fettered and bound by the Reconstruction Acts, and was unable to do anything for itself until after 1876—the date of the Tilden-Hayes election.

The prevailing characteristic of this period is the increasing influence of Europe upon the two countries. Alexander Second's action in liberating the serfs had thrown the gates open to all the ideas of European liberalism. The opening up of the western plains and the vast region between the Rockies and the Pacific with its wealth in minerals, as well as its cattle-raising possibilities, opened the gates no less to the countless hosts of European settlers. The Irish had already been coming since the terrible famine years of 1845-7, and the Germans too had come over ever since the forties. By the outbreak of the Civil War the original native-born population had begun to be outnumbered by the hosts of immigrants that passed steadily through the Narrows. After 1870, with the Prussian monarchy in complete control over Germany, the House of Savoy in control of Italy, and England less disposed than ever to give the Irish Home Rule, the swarms of immigrants increased, fed by thousands whose ancestors had fought and died in the cause of Republicanism in some part or the other of Europe, and by millions who were attracted across the Atlantic simply by the steamer-agent's tales of Western prosperity. The Italians, notably, soon became as prominent as the Irish and the Germans; and to all these races were added Scandinavians, Czechs, Hungarians, Lithuanians, Poles from the

eastern frontiers of Europe, and Jews from every part of the world. The three states of the remote northwest, Washington, Oregon, and Idaho increased their population from 282,000 in 1880 to 763,000 in 1890 and to two millions in 1910; while California which contained only five hundred thousand people when the first transcontinental railway was finished in 1869, added more than half the same number to its inhabitants in the next decade. In twenty years after 1870, the population of Kansas, Nebraska, and the Dakotas was increased sixfold. The city of Chicago which had only 350 population in 1833, by 1840 contained over four thousand, and in 1870 had swollen to the enormous figure of three hundred thousand! Thus while Russia added to its power by spreading a homogeneous population over immense tracts of unsettled country eastward, America obtained a firm grip on its own domain by importing heterogeneous populations into the vast tract of unsettled country westward.*

It is impossible, therefore, in the thirty years that followed 1865, to construct anything resembling a cultural history of either Russia or America. At least, literature will not serve so completely as an index to the flow of ideas that took place in this period. The Russian genius during this period

* It has been estimated that during the fifty years between 1870 and 1910, America added to her previous population of forty million, twenty-five million foreign settlers.

manifested itself best in music; this was the period of Tschaikowsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Mussorgsky, Borodin. In America the genius of the race took up architecture, and it was the Golden Age of Richard Morris Hunt, of Richardson, Root, McKim, Louis Sullivan, and of the craftsmen like La Farge and St. Gaudens who worked with them. In each case, it was a period of eclecticism. In Russia the German-Italian form of symphony and opera was borrowed, and was filled with a content that was essentially rooted in folk-emotion; in America the style of the Beaux-Arts or of Ancient Rome or the Early Middle Ages was equally borrowed, to be infused with native-born force and energy. The most original—because the least foreign—elements in this development had the most difficult task to survive. They had to learn how to speak their message of purely native inspiration in a language that, through derivation from European tradition, was completely alien to them. One might draw a not uninstructive parallel between Mussorgsky, the most Russian of Russian composers, and the gifted but unfortunate Louis Sullivan. Each had much to say to their generation that no one would accept. But this is not the place for such a comparison, inasmuch as we have from the outset decided to confine our critical investigation to the limits of a single art, that of literature.

2

American literature during the period of the seventies and eighties was entirely dominated by the figure of Samuel Langhorne Clemens, known to innumerable admirers as "Mark Twain." At first sight, his work is on so much a lower level than that of Hawthorne, Henry James or Whitman as to be unworthy of consideration in the opinion of the few culture-saturated critics who mostly arrange and settle the merit of authors. And it is worth noticing that Clemens carried out his work without any particular encouragement from such intellectual critics. Their encouragement only came to him at the close of his life, when he was already writing sentimental and feebly grotesque satires on life in general, and vainly setting up as a philosopher with his assault on Christian Science, and the desolatingly mechanistic view of life set out in "What is Man?" The fact is, that for the latter part of his life, Mark Twain, profiting by an immense popularity, wrote nothing but superior journalism or feeble echoes of his own inimitable early self. That early self left an immortal residue in only three volumes—"Tom Sawyer," "Huckleberry Finn," and the first twenty chapters of "Life on the Mississippi." If we add to this the figure of Colonel Mulberry Sellers in the book appropriately

called "The Gilded Age," and a few chapters of "Roughing It," we obtain all of Mark Twain that posterity will presumably read and cherish.

Mark Twain is the perfect type of the backwoodsman in letters. His early training as a newspaper man gave him sufficient command over the written word to express himself clearly, and an early roving life, with its picturesque experience, did the rest. In so far as he had any philosophy of life at all, it was a doctrine to the effect that the uncultivated and native present day is worth all the feudal past, and that homely shrewdness and simplicity is better than spiritual and intellectual mastery. This doctrine has its affinities to the glorification of the "average man" preached by Whitman, and in the later Mark Twain one finds as it were, Whitman simplified and caricatured:—the Yankee is superior to King Arthur, democracy is superior to aristocracy, machinery is more than great painting and music, woman is inevitably a superior *genus* to man. But no one reads Mark Twain for his philosophy nowadays, though thousands have read him for his unsurpassed pictures of frontier types, for his description of an America that has vanished before the advance of the modern mechanical civilisation which it brought in its train. The finest of his works, "Huckleberry Finn," and "Life on the Mississippi," are immense picaresque epics of irre-

sponsible adventure. To find anything resembling them one has to go back to Europe of the sixteenth century. They represent a stage of history Europe had long outgrown; a youth-time in a world which was innocent alike of culture and of morality. Mark Twain himself said of his finest book that it had no moral, and that "they who find a plot in it, shall be shot." In "Huckleberry Finn" there is no plot but only happenings: a mad, gay, and cruel *reductio ad absurdum* of life itself, as lived under frontier conditions, with the incurable nostalgia for romantic and picturesque escapades (witness Jim's release from the lock-up, or the episode of the false Dauphin and the Duke) leading the story on.

The proper parallel here is with Nicholas Leskov (or Lyeskov). This author, practically unknown out of Russia, owed his popularity among the uncultivated public to the astounding freshness of his rendering of remote Russian life—the life of priests in tiny villages, of fishermen and hunters, of tramps and vagabonds. It is only of recent years that foreign critics have observed that in reading Lyeskov, we are reading the most Russian of authors. Dostoevsky's Russia is a distorted picture, tinged with his own spiritual struggle; Tolstoy's is a great epic warped by his own perverse intellect; but Lyeskov is observer pure and simple. He too, like Clemens, had to suffer from an early period in

which his work was utterly despised by the literary intelligentsia—who were more highly polished and socialistic, in a materialistic sense, in their work. He also had a late period in which he comes nearer and nearer to the sentimental side of Tolstoy, as Clemens had a period in which he apes Whitman. But the essential Lyeskov is the unsurpassed portrayer of the Russian frontier, and of its cruel, carefree, and purposeless life. His masterpiece, "The Enchanted Wanderer," recently translated into English, is even in its translation a work of immense sane humanity and humour. Like "Huckleberry Finn," it is a picaresque novel, and like that book it has neither plot nor moral. It is folk-tale pure and simple, stripped of all accretions of superstition, symbolism, and magic, and with nothing but the rounded note of a persistent religious nostalgia (akin to Tom Sawyer's nostalgic longings for romance and adventure) to give it coherence.

It would be a mistake however to suppose that either Lyeskov or Mark Twain were anything more than exceptions in the course of their respective literatures during this period. The whole epoch from 1870 down to the end of the century is marked by a progressive drifting apart of the two countries which had so nearly coincided in spirit in Whitman and Tolstoy, Melville and Dostoevsky. This drifting apart was marked by an increasing outward

standardisation of effort. It was during this period that the standardised Russian revolutionary, mouthing all the catchwords of advanced European materialism, began to appear, to be matched by his contemporary, the standardised American business man. Each class consumed the sort of literature that was suited to its palate. In Russia there flourished the peasant novel of highly socialistic tendencies, the works of Gleb Uspensky, Pissemsky, Korolenko, and the bitterer and more intellectually upright Saltykov-Schedrin. In America the type of fiction most in demand dealt mainly with cultivated, well-to-do people, was generally optimistic in outlook, but was no less surely an article prepared to satisfy popular demand. Its best output was in the tales of Howells, Cable, Thomas Nelson Page, James Lane Allen, Mrs. Wharton. The honest peasant of the one matches pretty completely the upright capitalist (usually the last scion of an old southern or New England family) of the other. But the line of advance, which was to produce the most revolutionary fruit in the nineties, lay through the short story.

8

The short story as practised in the Occident throughout the nineteenth century, is in fact a typi-

cally oversophisticated and decadent art-form. To the mind of the highly cultured but impotently sensitive reader it presents not the great curve of emotion that the finest poetry offers, not the "allegory addressed to the intellectual imagination" of great prose, not even the panoramic viewpoint of outer action or of spiritual abysses that the novel reveals, but a cool complete piece of minor architecture, a fragment of life, a detached statement that has neither past nor future implied in it. The short stories of the East are largely different. They are popular epics, and different also in their moral earnestness and immense range in short compass are the short stories of Balzac, Flaubert, Hawthorne. The technically perfect modern short story has no moral earnestness, no message, it merely is an incident revealed so completely as to leave no loophole for the imagination. It is objective reporting, informed by a mood; and no one carried the art of short story writing further in these respects than the American Stephen Crane and the Russian Anton Tchekhov.

The comparison between the methods of Crane and Tchekhov has been made before, but it is one that will bear reiteration. It extends even to personal and social characteristics. Both were descendants of old petty bourgeois families, long settled on the soil. Both graduated through jour-

nalism into their art. Tchekhov began by writing quite commonplace and feeble comic stories, and Crane wasted a great deal of his time on hackwork. Both were irregular workers, and were men of feeble health. Indeed the only difference is that Tchekhov, thanks to his life as a country physician, matured later and gained a greater final mastery over his material than Crane.

The aim of both was an entirely impersonal and objective presentation of life. This has been called realism, but in both Crane's and Tchekhov's case, it came nearer impressionism than realism. Each was at the mercy of a single mood which is reiterated in their stories *ad nauseam*. In Tchekhov's case the mood is deliberately low-toned, sombre, and neutral —a mood of resignation, of quiescence, of Buddhistic absorption into Nirvana. In Crane's case the mood is one of racketing excitement, fierce and brutal display of energy. On these two moods each exhausted the resources of their art: Crane his color vowels, and sudden startling comparisons; Tchekhov his monotonous deliberately prosaic effect. But in each case, the mood flows out of an attitude towards life that is the same. To both the world, and particularly nature, is deliberately hostile, alien to the human spirit. Before this tragic fact, Tchekhov counselled acceptance, endurance; Crane on the other hand advocated a furious dis-

play of heroic energy. Thus Crane is most completely the artist when his frequently violent satiric intention is laid aside, and he can play the part of the poet of action, as in the superb "Red Badge of Courage," which first won him fame, and which is free from his stoical fatalism. Tchekhov is, on the other hand, at his best in his plays, notably "The Cherry Orchard," where he loses sight of his own sentimentalism, and works with at least some underlying satiric intent. Neither, however, ever wrote a complete masterpiece, nor were they capable of doing so. Despite the activities of the Tchekhov cult we must insist that the American at his best frequently appears the finer artist, as in this story already mentioned, or in "The Open Boat." He at least had a supreme power of visualising a scene, and a trick of individualising his characters by one outstanding trait or peculiarity which the Russian lacked, though this is perhaps counterbalanced by Tchekhov's more complete mastery over architectural form.

Both were minor writers, because they were fatalists. To the great writer life is a fatality, frequently a tragedy, but not a tragedy preordained. But this sense of being doomed by external fatality, by the insignificant fact, is the very basis of Tchekhov's work—and the same sense haunted Crane in his brief, agitated life. They

were both, it is possible, depressed beyond the normal in their personal temperaments. But still more certainly, the period in which they lived was one in which major art was not possible. In America the plutocrats of the Gilded Age were going down in a blaze of glory. Outrageous and shameless coarseness and corruption was mingled with hypocritic parade of lip-service to genteel virtue; European snobbery walked arm in arm with a pretence of democratic simplicity. In Russia, the dreary record of reaction under Alexander III was trailing to its unhonoured grave in the sink of official corruption under Nicholas. Both Crane and Tchekhov were victims of their times, and both held the art for art's sake theory far more sincerely probably than their European contemporaries. Both with supreme skill showed that even when held sincerely, it but resulted in the best cases, in something philosophically incomplete; at the worst, in a personal tic, a mannerism.

4

The high technical level to which Crane and Tchekhov had brought their art, combined with their avoidance of philosophic content, were both symptoms of the gulf down which the American and the Russian spirit had descended since the high-

water mark in the sixties. Multitudes of men now knew that something was wrong; but few could suggest a remedy. Two men, however, by their personal effort, attempted at least to stay or fix the retrograde movement of the spirit by attempting the *Weltanschauung* of a formal philosophy. These men were Vladimir Soloviev and William James.

Before their coming, neither country had known anything resembling a formal philosophy. Emerson, it is true, had raised himself to the dignity of being ranked as one; but Emerson was in truth at bottom partly a mystic poet, partly a shrewd detached commentator on events. His best work bears as little relation to philosophy definitely so called, as the more pessimistically colored—but not less philosophical in content—poetry of Tyutchev bears to the German transcendentalism of his time. In any case, James did not derive his philosophy from Emerson, but from an attitude much more matter-of-fact. He obtained it from the New England practical spirit, the "desire to get on in life," the everyday common sense that was, when he wrote, proving so morally inadequate to deal with the ever-increasing problems of capitalism and industrialism. In his insistence on practicality, on the "truth that works," on "the cash-value of thought," William James was nearer to the needs and de-

mands of the average man as posited by Whitman; and much of his democratic outlook, his homely honesty of phrase was in fact due to Whitman. Similarly Soloviev drew his own preoccupation with moral problems, not from any preceding thinker, but direct from the piercing analysis of Dostoevsky.

Both James and Soloviev were educated and spent much of their lives abroad. The substance of their thought was derived in part from European, in part from American sources. The aim in each case was to reconcile two divergent streams of thought, to bring them into harmony. James after an early career in which he had tried to be an artist, engineer and physician in turn, turned to psychology. But his real interest lay outside the bounds of psychology—at that time dominated by the methods of the purely psycho-physical school. His early upbringing as a Swedenborgian, as well as a highly sensitive temperament, drew him to the investigation of religious phenomena, and all his life he strove to reconcile the higher ranges of mysticism, ecstasy, union with God, heroic self-sacrifice, with the plain common-sense of the average American type. Thus he was led to attempt to find a common ground between "radical empiricism"—the search for the usable truth, the trial-and-error, rule-of-thumb, method of the pragmatist—and the utterly unpractical absolute standpoint of the visionary.

In order to do so, he had to attack the point of view of the earlier idealists of the Kant and Hegel type, men who had inherited something of the old methods of scholasticism. He had to treat human life and aspiration not as an end, but an instrument; and to regard the universe not as a finished article, but as a pluralistic chaos. That he still strove to redeem that chaos consequently became merely a personal gesture, and not at all a question of final significance. In this, too, he resembles his spiritual progenitor, Walt Whitman.

Vladimir Soloviev was trained as a historian. He absorbed the historical sense from his father who had written a history of Russia, and his early work was devoted to Church History. In examining the history of Christianity he was struck by the fact that the Eastern and Western Churches had separated, and that neither was in agreement with Protestantism. This schism seemed to him to show that Christianity had somehow failed to fulfil the aim of its Founder, and he set himself the task of preaching the necessity of an undivided Church. This was the substance of his book "Russia and the Universal Church" which with its definitely Romanising tone was forbidden by the Russian censorship and had to appear first in a French translation. But even the Roman Church could not hold him for long. Christianity itself was worthless as a

revelation of God's purpose to man, except where based on a universal moral law, the "natural religion" of the eighteenth-century deists. To find this moral law seemed to him the aim of science; to invest it with all the grandeur of a revelation from on high was the purpose of religion. Thus Soloviev was led to try and reconcile the evolutionary theory of the West with the Eastern Orthodox tradition. In so doing he was forced to oppose the theories of the Schopenhauer and Tolstoy school which would strip religion of all its magic and mystic significance, and reduce life to passive non-resistance; a tendency which as he pointed out, was Buddhist, not Christian.

Moreover there remained for Soloviev the outstanding question which was, "If there is a universal moral law and if the Church itself can teach that law better than the Tolstoyan rationalist, why is there so much evil in the world, and what is the way to get rid of this evil?" The answer was that the evil was permitted by God, and that the only way to get rid of it was through ascetism, mortification of the flesh. There can be no doubt that Soloviev through the adoption of ascetic practices, deliberately shortened his own life. He was led therefore more and more to a position in which the whole history of the world appears as simply a gigantic conflict between Good and Evil. This position is

not Christian; it is in reality, Manichean. There is not one God, but two; God and Satan divide mankind between themselves, until the end of the world. Thus Soloviev ultimately found his problem unsolvable, and lapsed into a pluralism more logical and definite, and far more honest and despairing than the optimistic pluralism of James.

It seems a great tragedy that the American in the end gave his adherence to the philosophy of Bergson, with its aimless yielding to the endless flux, and its refusal of all stability to the intellect; while the Russian in his turn, preoccupied with the problem of evil, saw in the end Tolstoy as a precursor of Antichrist and wrote the half-insane rhapsody of the end of history which fills the last pages of his "Three Conversations." But in reality this tragedy was inevitable in both cases. The endless flux of Bergsonism bolstered James in the last of his illusions, the illusion that all good Americans are born and die with, the illusion that in the race of modern progress, America is ahead of the world and the world will be saved through her; while Soloviev's ultimate denial of moral progress, apart from the established Orthodox faith, saved the last of his illusions, the typically Russian illusion that Russia by remaining backward and resisting the West, will yet save the world. Each of these men is a standing proof that outside the frontiers of Europe, im-

personal thought, thought that is detached from daily circumstances is utterly impossible. Each is a vivid, embittered, and intensely honest and typical commentary on the hollowness and pretentiousness of European philosophy, when applied to conditions of life that remain outside the orbit of purely European interests.

5

With the onset of the twentieth century, we witness America and Russia taking up the same weapons in their rearguard battle with cosmopolitanism and Europeanism. The weapon in each case is that of realism. Thus in each country a school of writers sprung up to whom literature was largely a protest against unequal social conditions, injustices in the body politic, the yawning cleft between the rich and the poor, and the moral decay consequent upon the general nineteenth-century *"laissez-faire"* attitude. It is profitable to compare the school which is represented by Gorky, Kuprin, Bunin, in Russia with the group whose leading members in America were Edith Wharton, Upton Sinclair, Frank Norris, Robert Herrick. But we cannot really distinguish these writers on the basis of literary merit. They gave us naturalistic documents rather than artistic interpretations. Their work was interesting as protest mainly: the *Wel-*

tanschauung of these writers, if they possessed one, was pure naturalism, and as naturalists pure and simple they produced documents but not art. Some exception might be made for Gorky and Mrs. Wharton's "Ethan Frome," but except for the fact that the Americans chose their favourite heroes from business men enmeshed in their own toils, and the Russians from tramps and outlaws, there is but little otherwise to choose between them.

It is more instructive to note the damage which the theories of this group did to highly talented individual artists, like Leonid Andreiev and Jack London. Both might, under happier auspices, have been poets and it is worth noting that whenever either dealt with the material most known to them, the life of little insignificant out-of-the-way villages in the case of Andreiev ("The Governor," or "In the Fog") or the life of the untamed frontier in the case of London ("The Call of the Wild," "Burning Daylight"), each wrote something that might be called a minor classic. But Andreev's pretentious and melodramatic insistence on the "madness and horror," the void of life, together with his heavy sentimentalism (derived from doses of Schopenhauer and Tolstoy) is as meaningless to us as was London's confused minglings of Nietzschean master-morality with crude Socialistic strivings. London's "Sea Wolf" is, as a character, as much a

bit of pasteboard as Andreiev's "Lazarus." Both London and his Russian contemporary, were supremely honest men, who rejected with contempt the hypocritical lip-service to theory paid by the social reformers of their days; both preferred to be immoralists rather than sentimentalists, and it is for this that we must respect them, rather than for any good work. For it is obvious that both had their heads turned by early successes, and were victims of their own love of melodramatic excess. That two such men should have lacked moral stability sufficient to keep them from drinking themselves to death, shows how far the social order in America and Russia of their time was on the way to the abyss.

After their day the drive to naturalism continued, but on a lower level, having largely thrown overboard the general flavour of moral teaching that still persisted in the work of the earlier naturalists. The figure of the "business superman" appeared in America as the figure of the "sexual superman" appeared in Russia. Theodore Dreiser became responsible for the one, and Mikhail Artzybashev for the other. Whether there is really very much to choose between them as art-products is a question that time must settle. It is more important to note that this phase did not in any case last long. Between the year 1900 and the outbreak of the

great war there rose up in both countries a revolt against the "social document," and the naturalistic attitude towards life. This revolt took the form mainly of a more symbolical treatment of facts, and it expressed itself not in prose but in poetry. Thus Robinson, Frost, Lindsay, Sandburg, Miss Lowell, Conrad Aiken and Robinson Jeffers had their counterparts in time and aim in Balmont, Bryusov, Blok, Bely, Viacheslav Ivanov and Pasternak. The value of their work becomes more doubtful, as the younger, more savagely objective, post-war generation takes the field to-day. What is important to observe is that while cosmopolitan Naturalism held the field in 1900, by 1915 the situation was reversed and a new and more native symbolism, combined with a groping mysticism, derived from very primitive sources, and strongly dashed with sexual imagery, took its place. This even affected the prose writers such as Sologub and Sherwood Anderson.

This extraordinary reversal of literary taste, which took place in the limits of one half a generation, is a tragic indication of the fact that the mentality of Russia and America had already grown unstable. Instead of the long quarrel between upholders of mystic orthodoxy and advanced materialists, between Slavophils and Westernizers, literary conservators and outlaws, being settled, it

had grown more acute until the whole structure of society was rent by it from top to bottom. In the early twentieth century both Russia and America had to choose to break again with their past, to become something essentially different, as they had chosen in 1688, between 1773 and 1790, and in 1860. To show what the break was, and its results, it is necessary to turn back to the course of our interrupted historical survey.

BOOK IV

"The union of Russian revolutionary inspiration with the American practical spirit; this is the essence of practical Leninism."

JOSEPH STALIN.

"Machinery, the modern Messiah."

HENRY FORD.

Chapter XIV

THE history of the nineteenth century is the history of the decline and fall of Europe. The logical madness of Napoleon's attempt to transform by the power of the sword and the brilliance of his individual genius, a group of mutually jealous and innately suspicious nationalities, differing in language, religion and local tradition, into a single unified power, failed as soon as Napoleon became old enough to lose grip on his peculiar gifts. In this defeat both America and Russia, as we have seen, had their share. Russia exhausted Napoleon's armies, as England—the true parent of America, and of America's achieved Teutonic-Celtic compromise between apparent political liberty and actual spiritual conformity—exhausted his ideas. During this very period England and America drew together again, and again came into closest spiritual contact, despite the prolonged agonies of the Revolution, the memory of which smouldered less in the hearts of its leaders, such as Washington and Jefferson, than in the depths of the raw new settlements on the Indian frontier. Indeed, had it

not been for another characteristic piece of blundering diplomacy on the part of England, enshrined in what is known as Jay's Treaty, the two countries which had opposed each other so long and desperately, might have come into firm alliance. The prevailing sentiment in England, after all her wars, successful and unsuccessful, has usually been to shake hands with her late foe; but this refusal on the part of the people to bear a grudge is not always shared by the brilliant diplomats and the aristocratically educated politicians of that paradoxical island. What is won by the simple courage of her yeomen, England throws away by the clever stupidity and superiority of her politicians, who are for the most part far too cynically sophisticated to place any reliance on human nature. This was again the case after the Napoleonic struggle: America and England had to remain politically isolated—though in fact, all their interests were shared in common—for the simple reason that the Englishman could only envisage empire in terms of trading posts separated by oceans, while the American saw his empire as new settlements spreading ever westward across unpopulated land-wastes.

On the other and eastern frontier of Europe, where the steppes of the Ukraine unchangeably roll up to the gates of Moscow, the armies of Napoleon had but recently passed, strewing with the

evidences of the most disastrous defeat in history the snow-covered plains. The outcome of Napoleon's titanic failure was soon to be apparent here not less in the spiritual than in the military sphere. Russia moved again, and still more sharply, away from Europe, as America had but recently and once again moved away from England. Czar Alexander I, who might now pride himself on the fact that his climate, if not his armies, had defeated Napoleon, was not in the least disposed to undervalue the historical importance of the appearance of that personage. To England, whether the England was that of the yokel or the poet, of Hodge or of Byron and Shelley, Napoleon was merely a temporary and absurd tyrant—a Corsican ogre feasting on the sufferings of slaves groaning beneath his whip-lash; one who had betrayed the spirit of liberty for a personal whim. To Alexander I and the whole Russian people, Napoleon was the French Revolution itself, *in propria persona,* the Promethean fire-bringer of liberty, the logical incarnation of a spirit opposed to historical continuity. The fact that he wore a military uniform and called himself Emperor, as did the Czar, did not matter. What mattered was that one of common birth, owning no power of descent save that conferred on him by his own ability, the representative of the dispossessed, the opponent of religion, and

the overthrower everywhere of monarchy, should dare to measure swords with the consecrated Czar himself, whose will was sacred. This was sufficient to identify Napoleon as Antichrist in the eyes of Alexander and his meanest subjects alike. And the subsequent history shows that the Czar was prepared, by all the traditions of his breed and office, to act upon this hint up to the limit. In order to maintain his power intact, he had to see to it that Europe begot no more Napoleons. His one idea for the regeneration of the world was the establishment of a Holy Alliance, of absolute monarchs with the aim of upholding everywhere the sacrosanct traditions of religion and monarchy, and everywhere keeping down the incoherent but vital drive to liberty that Napoleon had striven to transform into a weapon of self-aggrandisement. Great was Alexander's disillusionment when he discovered the chief opponent to this project was to be England itself, which had but recently fought Napoleon to the death; still greater was his despair when he learned through the formation of the Decembrist conspiracy, that his own intelligentsia would not follow him. With dramatic suddenness the vain, obstinate, fickle and shiftily brilliant creature who had saved Europe from republicanism, died; or, according to Russian legend, did not die, but walked out upon the road as a pilgrim under an

assumed name, in expiation of the crime of parricide by which he had come to the throne. In any case, he left Russia to a more ruthless successor, determined alike to uphold his personal prestige and totally undisposed to play with the dangerously liberal notions of Europe.

Here we must again remind the reader that it is not the primary purpose of this study to provide a detailed and objective history of either Europe, America, or Russia as they manifested themselves throughout the nineteenth century. Rather our aim is to pierce everywhere through this tangled surface of objective facts to the more permanent realm of subjective results. The story of the nineteenth century in Europe is, as far as the European peoples are concerned, the story of the final emergence of an intense and peculiarly aggravated form of bourgeois nationalism. The French Revolution, Napoleon, and the industrial revolution, as political factors, alike conspired to intensify and make acute this mob-drift; romanticism and realism alike, in the field of the arts, fanned its fires. The nineteenth century proved that Europe no longer existed as a great political and spiritual possibility. In its place were only a group of mutually jealous and competitive units, whose local quarrels, to be healed only by exhaustion, would recur again and again. In compensation, the nineteenth century, if it could

not produce a rebirth of Mediæval Europe, gave us for the first time since the Middle Ages, Europeans. Through Goethe and Heine, Stendhal and Flaubert, Ibsen and Nietzsche, Havelock Ellis and Verhaeren, Unamuno and Ferrero the line of the great Europeans has gone on, embracing all the European nations in the persons of certain representatives, in a mingled blend of love of country combined with love of mankind, cultivation of local traditions fused with total abhorrence of war. Perhaps the noblest task that America and Russia have accomplished in the world, has been that they have sometimes, albeit unconsciously, aided and abetted in the production of true Europeans. For without such, Europe at the present day would be what she has been for a century past, a desert.

2

The significance of the nineteenth century to America is that it precipitated and made acute the struggle between the commercial and industrial North, the agrarian and conservative South, and the vast mass of raw pioneers who, in the Middle West, actually held the balance of power. The North, in the outcome easily won, less on account of its numbers, and certainly not because of any intellectual brilliance, but because of the plain fact that

the South and the Middle West could not even agree among themselves as regards essentials. The New England minority, men like the Transcendentalists, Fourierites, Abolitionists, regarded the perfect form of civilisation as a collection of industrial bourgeois city-states, strongly practical in aim, egalitarian in essence, dependent on absolute liberty of the citizen. To achieve this aim it was necessary for them to agitate for the abolition of negro slavery, which had existed in the South since the Colonial Period. The Southern minority, on the other hand, envisaged the perfect state as a collection of loosely-combined agrarian communities, maintained precisely by the development of slavery as an institution, and governed by an élite of aristocrats, whose activities, released from manual toil, could flow into intellectual channels. The balance of power between these two tendencies, which were incompatible from the outset, lay in the hands of the frontier squatter class of the Middle West and Far West. Their only concern was, which side could provide them most quickly with manufactured articles in return for their raw products. Garrison meant as little, spiritually, to them as Calhoun. America was their oyster, and all they cared for was the eating; in other words, they measured everything precisely by its value in dollars and cents to themselves. Since they were mostly poor men, de-

pendent on their labor, and not economically tied to any particular section of the country (the whole history of the American frontier is a history of continual migration) they looked askance at slavery, which was decidedly the sort of game only a settled, rich man could play. Since New England idealism meant rather devotion to culture than to goods and chattels, they were equally indifferent to the most radical ideas of the New England reformers. They preferred to steer a middle course, and neither to accept slavery nor transcendentalism, realising that they had a continent to develop and their fortunes to make, and that the balance of power lay in their hands. From their emergence on the American stage in the person of President Andrew Jackson in 1829, we may date the typical shibboleths of "union" being held more precious than liberty, the constitution as impervious to logic, cheap money and big business as more important factors in life than either leisure or high thinking.

The situation in Russia differed in form, and in form only. In essentials it was precisely the same. Once again we have a majority of unintelligent peasants, a tiny minority of intelligent radicals, and between them the theoretically unlimited power of the Czar. The difficulty with the radicals was that they could not even agree among themselves. Some were absorbed by the materialistic socialism of the

West, which was to be elevated to the rank of a dogma by the work of Karl Marx in this very epoch; still others were non-resistant idealists and anarchists; still a third group were mystic reactionaries, strongly tinged with the Oriental communism that lies at the heart of Christianity viewed in its most primitive aspect. The Czar was quite frequently ready to listen to them; in fact, the sole redeeming traits in the character of Nicholas I, who was Alexander's successor, were his befriending of radical Russian authors (including Pushkin and Griboedev), his personal courage, and his determination to make decisions for himself. But the balance of the Czar's power lay with the immense mass of uneducated, coarse and dirty peasantry; so long as their superstitions were not meddled with, so long as Russia could wage successful wars abroad, thus keeping up the price of foodstuffs, so long as the authority of the landowners and the burden of taxes lay not too heavy on their shoulders, all would be well. Nicholas' system of maintaining, as far as possible, the internal *status quo* while outwardly posing as the champion of Christianity and the upholder of the oppressed Slav race (which at this time was striving to get free from the yoke of Turkey) broke down badly in the ill-success of the Crimean War. The system of maintaining power by pressing upon Europe, and doing nothing

within, could not go on. Czardom itself could not survive, so long as serfdom persisted as an institution. Under Nicholas' successor, Alexander II, serfdom was abolished by a stroke of the pen, and thenceforward all Russians were theoretically free. To reach the same result, at the same moment, America had to go through the agony of four years' civil war.

The outcome of this momentous decision was the same in both cases. In America, the Southern aristocracy was swept away, but with it went the last remnant of New England idealism. The "go-getter" type of American definitely appeared, and has dominated the scene ever since, despite every effort to uproot him. The seventies became for America the dawn of the "gilded age"; an orgy of land speculation, of feverish devil-may-care industrialism, of stock exchange gambling and political corruption swept the country. The South could not protest, being enslaved by the corrupt reconstruction government; the protest of the surviving New England idealists went unheeded. Culture was only important in so far as it represented an acquisitive value and the aim of all Americans became to acquire the essential wealth that could enable them to purchase culture, and so show themselves superior to their neighbours.

Meantime the country was filling up with im-

poverished but ambitious European immigrants, from Ireland, Germany, Scandinavia, Italy, the Balkans, who were ready to barter their share in European traditions for a hand in the melting-pot, which was to transform them all from disillusioned idealists into one hundred per cent wage-slaves. The nineteenth century in America thus proved a tragic triumph of the "divine average" which Whitman had so mistakenly hymned. It left America at the close of the nineties industrial in essence, ruthlessly efficient, contemptuous of Europe, and essentially vulgar. Out of the strivings of Virginia aristocrats and New England radicals had emerged a land of bumptious barbarians. The last heirs of the old intellectual tradition, men like Henry James, Whistler, Stephen Crane, even Mark Twain, began coming to Europe and staying there, in voluntary exile.

The outcome in Russia was equally disastrous to the spiritual health of the nation at large. The result of the alliance between Czar and mujik was but to strengthen the hostility to all ideas, especially to European ideas, and to drive the minority of the intelligentsia still further along the path that led to desperate nihilism. After a brief interlude of liberalism under Alexander II, Russia again took the path of repression, and the reign of his successors, Alexander III and Nicholas II, are

noteworthy only for the complete suppression of all thought, the relentless persecution of every form of protest against the established trinity of orthodoxy, autocracy and Don Cossack brutality. Even Dostoevsky, who regarded himself as the special prophet of the old dispensation, was obliged in his famous Pushkin address, delivered at the close of his life, to utter a protest against the prevailing dirt, corruption, inefficiency and criminality, and to uphold the work of the revolutionaries, by speaking of Russia's "pan-human mission," and the ideals of the "Russian wanderer." For the rest, persecuted, outlawed, butchered and oppressed, Russian thought scarcely dared lift up its head. Nicholas II succeeded, and nothing was changed. The end of the century found Russia sinking into a quagmire of corruption; and literature, which had maintained its protest since Pushkin, began to give up the struggle by taking on the colours of a defeated pessimism—the sensational pessimism of Andreiev, the neutral pessimism of Tchekhov, the immoralist Nietzschean pessimism of Artzybashev. The one outlet left to the Russian spirit was an illimitable despair.

The nineteenth century in America concluded with a great economic crisis followed by a foreign war, the first war in which America had been engaged since the Civil War had closed thirty years

before. The nineteenth century in Russia closed also, a few years later, with a foreign war in the Far East, which coincided with an economic and political crisis at home. These two events were the logical outcome of the previous development we have already traced, and which had apparently fully settled the *status quo* in both countries, without really settling anything. In both countries the unsolved questions of the relation between industrialism and agrarianism, monopoly and free ownership, foreign expansion and home reform, came almost simultaneously to a head. In 1898, following on the panic and great strike of 1893-4, America went to war with Spain; in 1904 the Russian government, which had steadily pursued, since the Crimean War, an ambitious advance through Siberia and Manchuria to the point where it was prepared, through possession of the spearhead of Port Arthur, to challenge Europe's growing interest in China and Korea, found itself surprisingly halted by the outbreak of a struggle with Japan.

3

It is necessary here to go back a little, and to ask the question why these two movements which ushered in the twentieth century, did not coincide in date in both countries, inasmuch as they derived

ultimately from the same tragic division of opinion between rulers and ruled, intelligentsia and peasants, though the intelligentsia in the one case were a handful of thinking radicals striving to break down the strangle-hold of the big business bosses and protectionist monopolies, and in the other an even more desperate handful of writers and publicists vainly protesting against the unholy alliance of Czardom, corrupt civil service, and secret police.

The answer to this question is to be found in the unequal incidence of the industrial era in point of time upon both countries. America had become industrial, except for the South, as early as 1840. After 1865 industrialism was everywhere paramount, and its sway was undisputed. But in Russia industrialism did not really begin until after 1892, when Sergius Witte became Minister of Finance and of Communications. As a direct result, the Transsiberian railway was built, thus giving Russia at last full opportunity for expansion in the only direction in which expansion was left open to her, namely, the Far East. Russia thereby followed the path of full industrialism, a path which had been open to the United States ever since the first transcontinental railway, the Union Pacific, had been opened in 1877. It is interesting to note that, once again, what was in the latter case the result of the steady influence of millions of new

settlers upon a Federal government impotent to direct or interfere (for the Union Pacific was begun during the upheaval of the Civil War) became in the latter, the action of only one man, backed by the authority of the Czar.

In this delay of about a generation may be found the reason why Russia postponed the internal crisis that in her case, as in America's, was to mark the slow transition from spiritual adolescence to dangerous maturity. Industrialism, in both cases, provided the lever that set in motion, once for all, the vast and ponderous machine that had been created. In the one case, it solidified, in the other it disrupted; and we need not invoke either Slav stupidity or Yankee smartness to explain the psychological causes of the crisis of 1904-5 or that of 1893-1898. In essence the two movements were similar, it was only in their results—as is practically always the case in American and Russian social life—that they could be thought of apart. In America the régime of free competition in industry supported by protective tariffs, and outward lip service to the Federal constitution as the sole God-given means of developing and fulfilling the destinies of the United States, had steadily built up the cities at the expense of the agrarian interest, until a succession of bad crops unconsciously restored the balance. The result was, first, trade depression; then

reduction of wages; then a great strike at Chicago, which had, as the second American city, only just finished flamboyantly hailing the fourth centenary of Columbus' discovery by means of a World's Fair; lastly, blundering interference by the Federal Government which helped nobody and a smouldering agitation, freshly dividing the country into sections, arousing the discontented farmers for cheap money, and the discontented industrialists for an overseas empire, to absorb their surplus products. The result was that the inevitable demand for expansion of America beyond the ocean borders found its first moral pretext in the insurrection of 1895 in Cuba.

Turn from this to the situation in Russia, where to balance the American trinity of industrialist, agrarian and sentimental radical, we have the three already familiar elements of Czar, mujik, and intelligentsia nobility. Since 1861 the mujik had been nominally free, and their village zemstvos, or local assemblies, were growing inevitably in power and influence. The Czar owed the continuance of his power entirely to the support of this peasant class. But because of their continued increase in numbers, it was impossible to keep them contented without finding for them continually new lands whereon to settle; and such lands could only be opened in Siberia, Manchuria, Turkestan, the Far East. By

building the Siberian railway and by concentrating on industrial development, Witte simply speeded up the outcome of this logical process. Thereby he split up the radical intelligentsia into three groups; those who, working through the zemstvos and the landed classes, were demanding free speech and a parliament; those who, working through the industrialists, were all for a physical force revolution and Marxian socialism to follow; and those who, working through the newly created and prospering middle classes, were all for protecting their rights by a conservative parliament on the English model. By deliberately driving Russia to take the path of industrialism and eastward expansion, in order to maintain the alliance between Czar and peasant, Witte proved himself not the least important servant of the Crown; but his service led directly to two results. It created an urban proletariat, of the utmost future danger as a hotbed of political radicalism, and inevitably forced on the Japanese-Russian War.

In either case, the policy followed was an attempt to resolve by an arbitrary act certain difficulties that could only be attacked from within. The average Middle-Western farmer took no interest in an economic protectorate over the Caribbean; the average Russian provincial noble had no quarrel with Japan. In the one case, it was only through

the support of the great Eastern industrialists that the Union could be preserved in permanent form; in the other the central government was obliged to absorb a certain proportion of surplus peasant population, every year, either by creating an industrial class, or by promoting emigration to Siberia, in order to avoid civil war. The result of the movement of 1893-1898 was to make the industrial capitalist class the dictators of American policy, domestic and foreign; that of the parallel movement of 1893-1904 was to create a new industrial class, only awaiting a leader and an opportunity to take over the reins of government from the weak-kneed Czar and his advisers. That the one movement accomplished its ends largely by peaceable economic penetration, and that the other movement grew on account of its arbitrary and violent character matters little. Each violently wrenched a whole country out of its national orbit of development, and set it upon a path that inevitably brought it into conflict with other countries. In America's case the conflict was to be with Europe, in Russia's with Japan.

Thus both countries, for the space of about thirty years, had simultaneously explored the path of pacific expansion, and in both cases that means failed. That is the lesson we must keep in mind as once more we find America and Russia confronting each

other across the space of Europe at the close of the nineteenth century. Since 1865 America's entire policy had been maintenance of freedom of contract, protection of home markets, industrial expansion. The policy fell of its own weight because a glut of manufactured articles and the growing inability of the farmers to wring heavier crops from the soil, created a financial crisis of the type that recurs throughout American history. Since the disastrous Crimean War, and still more since the Treaty of Berlin in 1878 had robbed Russia of the fruits of her last victory over the Turks, the policy of the Czar and his advisers had been avoidance of all foreign ideas and radical notions combined with expansion of foreign markets and improvement of domestic communications in order to link up the most outlying parts of the Empire. This policy, too, fell of its own weight and came to nothing because in its zeal to foster commerce and industry it created an industrial urban class determined to take no orders even from the Czar, and because in its hurried race eastward, it finally dashed the tracepole of the Russian troika against the immovable foundation stones of the Great Wall of China.

Chapter XV

AT the close of the nineteenth century, the American people were opportunistic, optimistic, and prosperous; the Russian people were gradually sinking back from the status of a warlike, daring and adventurous nation into a state of sluggishly Oriental passivity and fatalism. In the one case, the power and resources of the West, exploited by the great Eastern financiers, had overwhelmed the last remnants of dying New England idealism, and had dragged the South, incapable of resistance, after it. In the other, the arbitrary will of the central government, backed by an army of corrupt bureaucrats, and by another army of illiterate peasants wearing the Czar's uniform, had slowly radiated from Moscow through the veins of an immense country until it reached the far distant Pacific at Vladivostok and Port Arthur. Had Washington or Catherine the Great been permitted to revisit the scene of their labours again at the close of the century, they might well have been amazed at the work of their descendants. Both would have been astounded at the immense ex-

pansion of what had been originally a very simple idea. Washington in particular would have been hard put to discover his small, and almost poverty-stricken country, almost all English-speaking, with its scant three millions of inhabitants, and frontiers scarcely one hundred miles removed from the seaboard, in the vast congeries of races, ninety millions strong, industrialised up to the hilt and flaunting their wealth, that swarmed over America. But Catherine, too, though she would still have found herself at home among the superstitious mujiks, would have missed the intellectual brilliance of her court and have thought the state bureaucracy overcrowded. Though she might have admired Witte and his special creation of the Transsiberian railway, she would have shrunk back in horror from Tolstoy as from a monstrosity. And what Catherine would have thought of the special qualities of will and character manifested by her descendant, Nicholas II, had best perhaps be left to the imagination. In short, though nothing apparently had been changed, everything in reality was different. America was waxing, and Russia was waning rapidly, like two moons revolving in opposite directions.

The same phenomenon, with the same result, had happened long ago in the ancient world. We have referred before to Egypt and Babylonia as provid-

ing an instructive parallel to the two cases of America and Russia. It is necessary now again to recall them to memory, and to note that the period of Egypt's greatest economic supremacy coincided precisely with the period of the supine Kassite rulers of Babylonia. That the Kassites were foreigners, is a fact perfectly well known, but it is also fair to point out that the Czar was in a very special sense a foreigner in his own realm. Catherine herself was purely East German; and the habit of marrying petty German princesses had persisted so long in the Romanov house that Nicholas II was himself the grandson of a princess of Hesse-Darmstadt and the husband of another. As in Babylonia, Russia was being bled white to support the supremacy of a foreign class. Meantime, America, holding for the most part to the dominant Republican party dynasty which had settled itself into power on the heels of the Civil War, had swept into its system of standardised ethics, mass-patriotism and business psychology, race after race from the old world. The situation was becoming not very different, after all, from that which confronted the Ancient World when Amenophis IV, later known as Akhnaton, mounted the throne of the Pharaohs. And the part that the Hittites had played in the drama of 1500 B.C. was to be played by Prussia;

for this is the period of Prussia's ultimate greatness on the world's stage.

The drama began in America with the outbreak of the Spanish-American War. The farmers of the South and West were already in revolt against the increasing cost of living which high protective tariffs had brought in their train. They were preparing to sweep the entire country under the leadership of Bryan. The industrial workers of the East had already threatened to follow them, in the great strike of 1893. If they had done so, the country would have split up in three sections, even less geographically definable than the boundaries of the North and South had proven at the time of the Civil War. The great industrialists of the East, and the millionaires of Wall Street with their hands on the pulse of the country, took fright. The election of 1896 proved the turning point. The nominee of the industrialist republicans was William McKinley, an affable, ingratiating, hard-working, but essentially spineless Ohioan; but the real power, the power of the campaign funds, lay in Wall Street, which lavishly poured out its treasure to aid the Republican Party to victory. The result was that the less-organised forces of Bryan failed; and McKinley became President. But the industrial outlook was none too rosy. In order to prevent a glut

of manufactured products, and the repetition of such a crisis of unemployment as had already taken place in 1893-6, it was necessary not only to maintain domestic protection, but to find foreign markets. And foreign markets in America's case meant inevitably foreign war. The pretext came when the battleship *Maine* blew up in Havana harbour. At the price of a war with Spain, a war almost lost through America's incapacity for military leadership, yet bound to be a victory in the end because of her opponent's even greater helplessness, America acquired an overseas dominion in the Philippines, and practical certainty of headship in the Caribbean in the not remote future.

The results were momentous, socially and psychologically. America had proven once and for all that she could defeat a European power in the field. That the power chosen for this experiment was Spain, which was antiquated in equipment, weak in leadership, and inefficient in diplomacy, mattered not a jot. The fact that various European countries had half-heartedly shown the Spanish some sympathy was enough to set fire to the powder-magazine of American jingoism. A vast subterranean echo of England's old Armada victory shook the Anglo-Saxon foundations of the country, trailed through the yellow press, and infected every woman and every schoolboy. This was truly the

legendary age of American history, and its chosen hero became Theodore Roosevelt, the millionaire turned cowboy, the "trust-buster" with the big stick who defied equally Wall Street and the trade unions, who was ready apparently to ride and tame together the two wild horses of industry and agriculture, and to implant in every American breast the triumph of the average man. Under his leadership America jumped overnight in the eyes of the world from the status of a gawky, awkward, shambling frontiersman of the Lincoln type, to that of a big overgrown schoolboy with a book in one hand and a baseball bat in the other, equally ready to lecture and to bully the world. One need only be respectful to the "basis of prosperity" on which all American institutions rested at home, and ready to pounce upon any European nation that dared to interfere abroad, in order to be great.

2

Turn now from this picture to that of Russia during the close of the twentieth century. The construction of the Transsiberian railway, and the consequent industrial régime that Witte had fostered, led to a momentary return of prosperity. His creation of a gold standard backed by a gold reserve, together with the state monopoly that at this

time was imposed on the manufacture and sale of vodka, happily combined with Alexander Third's open policy of neutrality in Europe and of rapid penetration to the Far East. The outcome was a hectic period of urban development and factory construction. Meanwhile, the peasantry, especially in the overcrowded region of the Lower Volga, had to continue to suffer, despite their emancipation. Their zemstvos, or local councils, were given no power of legislation; and they were still paying in taxes for the costs of their own liberation back in 1861, and were to continue to pay up to 1910. A succession of bad crops on the Lower Volga in 1891 and 1893 did the rest, and famine drove them into the factories of the large towns, where they rapidly became transformed from illiterate and untrained agriculturalists, with all the earth-born superstitions of their class, to active revolters and plotters against Church and State, greedily swallowing Marx as their new gospel.

In the midst of this situation Alexander III died, to be succeeded by the helplessly fatalistic and spineless Nicholas II. He soon fell under the spell of the young wife who had been brought from Germany for him by his father, and who had first appeared before the Russian people in Alexander's own funeral procession. This new accession, in 1894, simply meant that Alexander's policy would

continue to be followed blindly, but without the determination and efficiency that the Czar had shown in pursuing it. More and more the peasants were to be encouraged to emigrate; Siberia soon filled up with a new class of desperate adventurers, and those who did not take this path crowded into the factories of Moscow and St. Petersburg, where they were rapidly converted by the steady preaching of the fanatics of Marxism. Their motto was "Wait until the hour is ready when we may strike, and then throw down your tools." Meanwhile the government proved blind to this new development, and contented itself with further driving the intelligentsia underground or into exile, and making half-hearted attempts to limit the hours of work, and the age at which the people were to be employed in the new factories.

The clash came finally in 1904. In that year, Japan, taking fright at the steady penetration of Russian influence and trade through Manchuria to Korea, China, and the Pacific, suddenly moved her armies, without the formality of a declaration of war, against Port Arthur. The result was to find Russia utterly unprepared. East of Lake Baikal, where the Transsiberian railway had a gap of one hundred miles which could be traversed in summer by steamers, but in winter had to be crossed on sledges, Russia had only eighty thousand field

troops, with twenty-three thousand garrison, and thirty thousand railway frontier guards. Japan, on the other hand, could throw in one hundred and fifty thousand line troops at once, and held all the advantages of lines of communication. Russia was doomed to defeat from the outset; and this defeat, for the first time in her history, came not from the invading forces of Europe, but from her own invasion of Asia, which had been followed up to the point where she came into conflict with the one Asiatic nation which had westernised itself, and which was determined, thanks to its own population and trade problem, to keep a firm hold on the Pacific coast lands. But what made this defeat inevitable was the lack of enthusiasm that the Russian people themselves displayed towards the war. Since Nicholas, on his accession, had dismissed the appeal of the zemstvos for a parliamentary constitution as "senseless dreams," the landowners themselves had become hostile; and the new urban proletariat was indifferent to the demands of any class but its own, and waiting for its opportunity.

The outcome was to prove to anyone but the vacillating and incapable Czar, whose head had been completely turned by the large doses of flattery administered to him by Emperor Wilhelm II (who for his part secretly cherished ambitions towards Europe similar to Russia's Asiatic dreams)

that the continuance of power in the hands of the Romanovs, which had been the sole means of holding the Russian Empire together since the days of Peter the Great, would cease, if once deprived of the support of the united Russian people. Despite the blessings of the Orthodox Church on the new crusade against the Japanese, despite desperate attempts to whip up patriotic sentiment, Russia was defeated not only in Manchuria, but on the home front. The Japanese War concluded not only with military defeat, but with a firm promise on the part of the Czar to open a Duma. This was wrung from him by the great strike of 1905, which paralysed the entire country, and by the passive but effectual resistance of the agrarian class themselves. The war with Japan was rapidly wound up by the intervention of Witte, who made the best bargain he could under the circumstances, in August, 1905; and the attention of the Russian government henceforward was directed towards dealing with the desperate situation at home.

Nicholas might in this crisis have abdicated and passed on the succession of the throne to someone equipped with more will-power and sense of the situation than himself, but for the fact that the Czarina had at last, on the outbreak of the war, presented him with a son. His one object henceforward was to transmit the patrimony of the Rus-

sian Empire as intact as possible to his heir; and in this aim his wife completely seconded him. The drift of his policy was to summon the Duma, make only such concessions as could be wrung from him, and if the situation proved too dangerous, to reassert his autocracy. It was a policy of desperation, which needed such a supreme Machiavellian as Catherine the Great to carry out successfully; and the conditions—not to speak of the ability involved—under which it was now undertaken were entirely different. In order to keep an eye on the insistent smouldering rebellion of the new factory class, Nicholas' Government had adopted the policy of setting secret revolutionary agitators to work in industrial districts, in order that the expected uprising when it came might be known beforehand. The result had only been to completely paralyse the country in the strikes of 1905; and once the safety-valve of the Duma was constructed, it was not likely, despite the Czar's secret hopes, to merely blow off in talk.

There followed ten years of fantastic nightmare for Russia. While in America, the country grew more and more consolidated in its power and prosperity, more and more ready for the date when it might emerge into the leadership of the world, under the successful compromise between "big business" and free competition discovered by Roose-

velt; in Russia an outworn and scandalously patched together system tended more and more to break down under its own weight, as Napoleon long ago had accurately foreseen and predicted. The first Duma was suppressed, only to give way to one more radical. The elections were then purged so as to insure a conservative majority, but still the drift to revolution could only be temporarily stayed. What made matters still worse and finally transformed the most conservative landowning class into open opponents of the autocracy, were the scandals concerning the Czar's own court and heir. The wretched child for whom Nicholas had staked everything, proved a congenital invalid, with no hope for cure from legitimate doctoring. In this resort, the thoughts of the monarch and of his consort turned to the apparatus of miracle which, they fondly believed, lay somewhere in the country itself. The result is well known to the world at large. From the day when the animally cunning and unholy Rasputin first left the trail of his dirty boots across the Czar's carpet, Nicholas himself was doomed.

The watchword of the twentieth century for America was "uplift"; a determination to exploit the resources of the country up to the limit, and to preserve the Puritan outlook on life that had led to such important results, although the Puritan strain itself was steadily declining in numbers and

ability. Abroad, America was determined to make her influence felt as at home; and the shadow of the dollar began to extend itself not only over the American continent, but in the remote regions of Europe and the Far East. The watchword for Russia during the same period was suppression of everything that stood in the way of the continuance of the Romanov dynasty, and suppression of the underground struggle for power by all other sections. The combined forces of Church and State would struggle on for a time longer, though deprived of every vestige of intelligent support. There was nothing to do but to wait on fate. When Crown and Church fell, they would fall together. Abroad, Russia had little influence; all she asked for from her new ally France was not a hand in policy, but capital to enable her to meet the expenses of the immense military establishment she was compelled to keep up in order to avert an explosion at home. Though facing the East, she was drawn into the orbit of European nationalist diplomacy by her economic needs. In America, on the other hand, no one need ask Europe for financial aid. But there had to be an increasing economic penetration of Europe to counterbalance industrial tension at home.

3

Meantime, while these tremendous events were preparing, the nations of the European continent pursued the path that had been left open to them by Napoleon's collapse, the path of a final intensification of separate effort, backed by the combined forces of industrialism and parliamentarism. It is possible that never to the average individual had European life appeared on the surface so promising, so rich in its complexity, as during the first decade of the twentieth century. Despite the upheavals of 1848, despite the recrudescence of war that had broken out in the years 1866-1870, the continent that was the home of man's ripest and maturest forms of civilisation had made an astonishing recovery. The old and the new had been skilfully combined. Except in France, the trappings of royalty persisted side by side with keen-witted Parliaments, whose members, inflamed by fiery patriotism and the carefully fostered sense of nationality, vied with each other in demanding more and more factories and better armaments. Thanks to the triumphs of science, the ever new discoveries that had been made in the realm of invention, the spread of electric light, telephones, railways, sanitation, medical skill, literacy, with the rapidly approaching advent of the motor car and the aero-

plane in the offing—thanks to all these things, and the possession of the franchise, the future was held to be a rosy one. England in particular fêted the culmination of the Victorian age, and her last triumph over the Boers. France threw wide the doors of a great exhibition in Paris to celebrate a century of progress. Italy had reawakened as by magic from her decay, and was becoming a modern nation, without losing her ancient picturesqueness. In Austria, despite internal difficulties, the veteran Franz Joseph still firmly held together the various parts of his ramshackle Empire. Even backward Spain, newly defeated by America, might aspire to a new Empire in Morocco. As for the Far East, that too was giving way before the dominating force of the white man; in the Philippines, where America was proving herself the heir to England's colonial ability; in China, where the Boxer rising had been quelled; in India, which England held firmly; and on the continent of Africa, parcelled out into colonies, and ruled by a dozen different nations. Yes, the future was full of hope, a great hope for the white man.

Such was the picture that Europe presented to the superficial observer at the close of the century. But underneath, things were very, very different, as a few lonely Europeans—men like Ibsen and Nietzsche—had learned to their cost. The ag-

gressive nationalism that had gone on unchecked throughout the nineteenth century had proven the real enemy of progress. Every European nation had its own army, its own fleet; and these immense military establishments were not only expensive, but dangerous. Peace was outwardly maintained by means of a complex web of diplomacy and treaties. The Triple Alliance balanced the Triple Entente; but day by day this web became stretched to finer tension, nearer to the breaking point. What was still worse was that a generation of unchecked industrial competition, taking as its tacit watchword its own interpretation of Darwin's law of "the struggle for life and the survival of the fittest," had created immense city slums, huge industrial areas of unrelieved hideousness, festering plague-spots where drink, crime, misery, disease—varied only by strikes and discontent—stalked open and unabashed. The protests of a few idealists, a few æstheticians, such as Ruskin and William Morris, had passed unheeded. Religion itself could do nothing to mend matters, inasmuch as it was mostly State-religion, paying lip-service to the established powers. When it condemned, it did so mostly for wrong reasons, as in the case of Zola, whose only too honest and accurate social novels proved meat far too strong for ecclesiastical stomachs.

To the radical minority of impartial and intelli-

gent observers, whether these called themselves socialists, anarchists, communists, or simply honest men, something in the cardboard edifice of European nationalistic prosperity was certain to give way; whether it was the perpetual military establishments, or the intensive industrial competition, or the futile and stupid madness of "patriotic" Parliaments, or the mob-spirit already manifesting itself as latent in democracy. But though the radicals saw the abyss yawning beneath their feet, they could not arrest the earth-tremor that was shortly to precipitate them and their respective nations into it. The régime of mechanical competition and of intensified nationalist effort had taken too firm a hold ever to be checked by words, however eloquent and far-seeing. As many intelligent men realised this fact, a sort of *fin de siècle* weariness sprang up through the nineties, spread itself throughout Europe, and after taking the various forms of decadentism, symbolism, exoticism, finally immobilised itself in the cynical lightness of an Anatole France. Meanwhile, the web of diplomacy was re-spun, re-stretched, half ruptured at a touch and again tied together. Every year brought new threats of war, balanced by new projects of peace, until most people dreamed that war might never come. The sound of a revolver-shot in the sleepy town of Serajevo at last proved sufficient to shatter the

fabric of a century of European diplomacy. A sort of convulsion passed over the face of the world, and the next moment, the nations that had maintained the fiction of armed peace ever since 1870 suddenly found themselves involved in the vast cataclysm of another European war.

Chapter XVI

FIFTEEN years since the outbreak, and eleven years since the cessation of European hostilities have passed away; but the question is not yet fully settled of responsibility for the war. Fortunately the question need not here be asked; for it would lead us too far into the maze of treaties and of safeguarding diplomacy by which the European nations strove to make innocuous that national sentiment they themselves had so outwardly fostered. Our concern here is not with moral responsibility, but with tendency and result. The tendency in Europe, for a century of European history, had been to prepare for war and to strive to maintain outwardly the peace by diplomacy. There came a time when the machine of war, carefully prepared and oiled, went forward simply of itself. The brakes of diplomacy refused to work any longer. That moment came in August, 1914.

The ultimate decision for war no doubt came from the fact that Russia, having mobilised her armies, in response to Austria's insulting ultimatum to Serbia, refused to withdraw the mobilisation or-

der and to allow Kaiser Wilhelm to make his eleventh-hour appearance in the rôle of peacemaker. But to say that thereby Russia was solely responsible for the war, is to utter the most pernicious nonsense. One might as well say that America—who began and furthered the negotiations in the person of President Wilson—was solely responsible for the peace, as embodied in the Treaty of Versailles. From the moment when the Czar and his advisers decided not to tolerate any further Austro-German interference with the Slav nationalities of the Balkans—interference which had already completely alienated Bulgaria and had transformed Rumania from a friendly people to a sullenly hostile one—from that moment the issue was already as good as settled. The Russian people awoke as by magic from the stupor of their long nightmare, and walked forth in the sunlight of a clear racial policy. Henceforward there were to be no more mad attempts to penetrate into distant Asia, while ignoring the plaint of the neighbour lying wounded at their own doors. The dream of uniting the oppressed western Slavs of Europe into one great free confederation under the headship of orthodox Moscow—a dream which had been Russia's up to Peter the Great's day, and which had revived under Nicholas I and Alexander II—needed but the touch of the Russian ultimatum to Austria to start

afresh from the soil. The "third Rome" was to be no more a lost ideal but an accomplished fact. In the fervour of a mystical re-conversion to an ideal which had somehow been lost sight of, all party differences, all scars and injuries were forgotten, and immense throngs again kneeled before the Czar. Only the tram operatives of St. Petersburg and Moscow, indifferent to any feeling but that of class, persisted for a time in a crippling strike, at the same time the ultimatum went forward to Austria and her ally, Germany. A small defection, but one pregnant with ominous possibilities for the future.

Having mobilised his forces on the frontier, ready to move forward in case Austria persisted in enforcing the terms of her outrageous military and political demands upon helpless Serbia, the Czar refused to countermand the order, despite Kaiser Wilhelm's belated and hysteric attempts to extricate himself from a position in which he had already placed himself. Had Russia done so, what would have been the result? The infuriated armies of Russia, withdrawn from the frontier, and doubly tricked by their rulers, from accomplishment of an aim that seemed to them perfectly just, might have perhaps marched upon Moscow and deposed the Romanovs. No doubt this consideration was also present in the minds of the Czar and of his chief

advisers. It was necessary at least to make an armed demonstration of goodwill to the Slav peoples in general, in order to save their faces. Moreover, there was France to be considered; France, which had solely stood by Russia during the dark years since 1905, and which was burning with the hope of revenge on Germany. So the time-limit of midnight August 1st expired, and the world blundered into war.

The fact that Russia, despite her immense awakening of enthusiasm for the cause of her fellow-Slavs, and despite her determination to fight on to the bitter end—a determination which she proved over and over again—was, after all, badly led and shamefully equipped, was no handicap at the outset. Had the East Prussian campaign which was halted at Tannenberg, not been fought, the allies could not have stood firm, and stemmed the German onset at the Marne. This campaign, in the end disastrous to the Russians, was nevertheless of equal moral effect on the ultimate result as was America's intervention three years later. In the one case as in the other, it was not skill, but the mere weight of numbers that finally decided the issue. The French troops, badly beaten in their first attempt to seize upon Alsace-Lorraine, and supported only by a meagre skeleton force of British, fell back steadily upon Paris, until sud-

denly the pressure upon their crumbling front relaxed and the desperate stand upon the Marne was transformed into an advance to the Aisne. And this policy had been dictated to the German general staff by the trail of smoking farmsteads and ravaged towns that the Russians were making in the Hohenzollern province of East Prussia. The well-directed thrust of the German armies to get between the desperate French troops and Paris itself, and to cut off one from the other, failed because two army corps had to be detached to aid Hindenburg to trap the advancing Russians at Tannenberg. Thus the true agent of the so-called "miracle of the Marne" was neither France nor England, but Russia—that Russia whom her allies abandoned and repudiated three years later in the time of her bitterest humiliation.

Despite the appalling loss of eighty thousand effectives at Tannenberg, the great masses of the Russian people undoubtedly felt that they could go on waging war indefinitely. Austria on the Carpathian-Polish frontier proved as easy for them to invade as East Prussia was impossible. All that they needed to accomplish the ultimate result was a steady supply of munitions and supplies from the better-equipped allies. But this feeling was not shared by the more intelligent heads of affairs in the allied countries. One of the most far-seeing,

the English war secretary, Kitchener, had spoken of three years as being the probable duration of the contest. It would take that time, he thought, to stem the German advance through Belgium into France and to train and equip armies sufficiently strong to coöperate with the Russians elsewhere, and thus to force Germany to abandon the struggle. By a miracle which was even greater in its total effect, though less popularly acclaimed, than the "miracle of the Marne," England barely managed to save the Channel Ports through her stand at Ypres, and thus effectively blockaded Germany—though this miracle was accomplished at the price of all her fighting effectives. The war became, after the first winter, a war of attrition with only one outstanding question: how long would it take the Allies, backed as they were by the immense wave of enthusiasm that was sweeping England and her colonies, to raise the enormous forces required to throw back Germany in the West, and to bring relief in the East to Russia, who was now equally blockaded—her only effective port being Archangel. For by this time Germany had persuaded Turkey to enter the war on her side.

The question was not long in being answered. In the spring of 1915 England committed herself to an attack upon the Gallipoli peninsula. Had that attack been pressed home, and Constantinople

fallen, the war would certainly have ended then and there. For Germany could not then have halted the immense supply of munitions and equipment that England, confident of her financial resources and still mistress of the seas, was now cleverly procuring for herself and her allies through the factories of outwardly neutral America. But as regards Russia, Germany was already doing her work pretty thoroughly. Though the supplies were pouring into Archangel, they were for the most part never allowed to leave the wharves, or mysteriously disappeared *en route* to the Russian armies. For by now a small group of sycophantic courtiers and corrupt administrators of the Czar's own inner circle, taking their tone from Berlin, and possibly also from the imperious and self-willed Czarina, were asking themselves the question, "What should happen, if, after all, we won? Would we not have put into the hands of the people the very weapon whereby to destroy our power?"

Thus through outward delay and inner treachery, the Allies themselves threw away their chief opportunity of forcing a decision upon Germany. The Gallipoli advance, thanks to divided counsels in England and in France, was never pressed home in time. The Russian armies, which despite their terrible shortage in munitions, had fought their way into Galicia in the spring of 1915 and delivered

their last effective threat to Vienna, crumbled away helplessly before the new policy Germany had conceived of standing like a wall in the West, and sweeping down all opposition in the East. From the foothills of the Carpathians and the Hungarian plains to the Pripet marshes that lay two hundred miles behind Warsaw, the Russian armies retreated, fighting with sticks instead of rifles, and having back of them not sufficient reserves of ammunition even to feed their batteries for a day. The outcome was that the Grand Duke Nicholas, an able hard-bitten soldier, was deposed from command of the Russian armies, and the Czar, now more than ever swayed by the evil influences of his consort and Rasputin, took command. Russia's doom was sealed.

At the same time, England, misled by the French into thinking that the German effectives were wasting away more rapidly than those of the Allies in the West, withdrew from Gallipoli and launched a disastrous attack at Loos, which was completely abortive, and served only to sweep away a great portion of the new armies which Kitchener had summoned into being. Henceforward, stalemate was practically certain, and by this stalemate Germany in the end stood ready to profit. For she could now move towards the East whenever and wherever she pleased. Bulgaria was brought into

the war on Germany's side to counterbalance Italy's defection to the cause of the Allies, in 1915; and from Antwerp to the Persian Gulf, Kaiser Wilhelm now ruled supreme. Russia had utterly collapsed in the East, and the iron wall of troops still stood firmly planted on French soil. That was the prospect that uplifted all German hearts to face, in 1916, another year of war.

2

So the first act of the great drama ended with Germany everywhere triumphant in the East and the Allies unable to force a decision anywhere on their own chosen ground of the West. But this result had only hardened the Western allies to persist. Their very lives were now at stake, and they still held the German lines immobilised, and the German coasts in the grip of the blockade. Economically, Germany could persist no more than Napoleon had persisted, in bearing the strain. She still had two military weapons whereby she might be able to bring her last two opponents, France and England, to the ground. These were her own power of making munitions, a power which had been tested and proven successful in pulverising the Russians in the spring of 1915; and in addition, the submarine which might eventually starve out Eng-

land. Both weapons were launched on the world in full strength in 1916.

The million of shells which the German armies showered on Verdun in the first twelve hours' bombardment of that fortress, and the million tons of shipping which England began losing every month, proved, however, equally ineffective to bring the war to its close. The first led directly to open discontent behind the lines in Germany itself; the latter led indirectly to America's entry into the war. For despite the wave of horror that had swept over her at the loss of the *Lusitania,* America now learned with amazement that the Germans had no intention whatever of abandoning the submarine, with its constant threat to neutral traffic. The outcome was to bring America into the struggle as a fresh factor of incalculable strength against an already disillusioned Germany.

Yet this decision was not taken immediately. Apart from two strongly vocal minorities, one of which insistently upheld the cause of the Allies, while the other just as clearly pointed out the tremendous triumphs of the German military machine, the great bulk of the American people were still indifferent. They had, and they desired, no quarrel with the people of Germany. On this basis, the sentimental basis of "having kept America out of the war," President Wilson was re-elected in No-

vember 1916. He knew, and had given indications that he knew, that the business of American neutrality was played out. But this knowledge was not shared by the great majority of his people, who fondly hoped to continue to profit at the expense of both sides in the struggle, by maintaining a prosperous neutrality.

With incredible folly, the military leaders of Germany, blind to the harvest of suffering they were creating in the homes and hearts of their own people, played completely into the American President's hands. They issued a proclamation pointing out the devastation that the German arms had already caused (a devastation real enough when we consider that a million Russians had been slaughtered, another million were prisoners in German hands, and that great tracts of land had been left desert in Northern France, Poland, and the Balkans) and demanding that this destruction should now cease. Let the Allies come to the council table, and they would learn Germany's demands. In the swollen phrases of this threatening note, the American President found his opportunity. He issued an appeal to the Allies to state their war aims. The reply was unexpectedly moderate, but official Germany gave no indication that she would accept it. Instead, while Wilson spoke openly of a peace without victory, based on the cessation of interference

by one nation in another's affairs, government by the consent of the governed, freedom of the seas, and limitation of armaments, Germany unsheathed her last weapon. On January 31st, 1917, she proclaimed a blockade of England, France, and Italy, closed the ports of Europe to neutral shipping, and declared that her submarines would sink henceforward all ships that endeavoured to trade with the belligerents at war with Germany. The answer was prompt and immediate. The American government severed diplomatic relations with Germany.

Thus America came into the war in defence of the same principle of freedom of the seas about which she had once before fought England in 1812. The leaders of Germany, had they possessed any intimate knowledge of American history, or the American character, might have foreseen this result. For the American nation as a whole lives and flourishes by, and wages its greatest struggles over, the application of certain very simple shibboleths and slogans. It was so in 1776, in 1812, in 1861, and it was again to prove so in 1917. Unlike the Russians, who can always change their outward principles completely, without losing any of their inner characteristics, the Americans have no special inner characteristics (as they have no aristocracy) but make up for this lack by their whole-hearted obedi-

ence to certain primary ideas and taboos which are to them sacred. The threat which Germany delivered to the cherished right of America to trade freely with all the nations of the earth, and thereby to end the whole edifice of American prosperity, proved sufficient to unite all sections of the American people; and never did President Wilson speak more surely on behalf of the entire nation than when, paraphrasing Luther, he declared that America "could do no other" than fight.

Thus it happened that America, immense in untouched power and resource, united to defeat Germany at the same moment when Russia, bleeding and defeated, with an internal revolution on her hands, reeled out of the struggle. For the first time —if we except the opening up of Japan in which each had taken previously a hand—the two nations whose effort was to dominate the future, met on a common ground. Like an electric flash, or the torches that the Greek runners had carried in their races long gone by, an impulse flashed from one to the other. That impulse may have differed in origin, but not in aim. What Russia by her concentration of power into a vacillating but central ruling class, could not do, America, by her diffusion of power into a self-reliant bourgeoisie, accomplished. Russia had crippled the European nationalist military machine; America overwhelmed the

economic. And not only the liberated Slavs of Eastern Europe, but also the Mediterranean powers, owe their existence to-day to the action of two nations, neither of which stood to profit thereby: America and Russia.

3

The impulse that had pushed the two great frontier nations forward to their momentary encounter on the blood-soaked and devastated soil of Europe, was unquestionably the same in essence, though differing profoundly in origin and in ultimate result. In the case of Russia, the unconscious weight of public opinion, holding steadily to its ancient dream of a great Pan-Slav Empire, had literally pushed from behind the vacillating and enfeebled Czar. In the case of America, an aloof, cautious, and essentially undemocratic President had found at last a democratic formula to which popular opinion, holding firm to its old dream of liberty for all peoples, could respond. The situation of 1688, of 1776-89, of 1860-65 was thus repeated, on a larger scale, and with the world itself for background; and the repercussion of both events in their respective countries led to the same profound and far-reaching changes.

In America, the principles which President Wil-

son had enunciated in his celebrated Fourteen Points—principles which the Allies promptly accepted as a basis for negotiation with a Germany, now ready to acknowledge its defeat, and which they conveniently forgot immediately afterwards—came into open and direct conflict with the outstanding notion which had guided America in its foreign relations since the days of Washington; that there was to be above all, aloofness from Europe, no entanglement in European affairs. The result was that the American President, who had been unquestionably empowered by his people to wage war, found himself unable to make peace. The moment he stepped upon European soil, President Wilson ceased to represent the American people and became only representative of himself. Thus the declaration of the Armistice led not to peace and sheathing of the sword, but to the last act of the world struggle, an act in which America was obliged to play the part of striving to rehabilitate Europe economically, while standing aloof politically.

At the other end of the scale, it is necessary to note that since the spring of 1917, Russia had been in revolution, a revolution which took an extreme form in the Bolshevik seizure of power in November of that year. Lacking a Czar, abandoned by its Allies, utterly disillusioned about the war, lead-

erless, and incapable of continuing the struggle, the country now presented an opportunity to any clever opportunist who could, under the guise of promising to the peasants bread, peace and land, effectively usurp the central power of the Czar. Lenin alone saw this opportunity and was ready to seize it and bend it to its purposes. A new alliance equally deadly to avowed Czarists and liberal intellectuals was forged between factory-worker and mujik; and from the achievement of this alliance we date present-day Russia. The situation had found the sole man, ruthless, undemocratic, efficient, who could guide it. In America, Wilson had skilfully manœuvred his people into a position where further retreat into neutrality was, as he thought, impossible. He had created his own opportunity, instead of waiting for it to come to him; and having created it, he immediately supposed that he could personally master it, and that it would follow him blindly. He did not count on the revulsion of horror that would follow upon America's awakening to the fact that the country was enmeshed in European diplomacy, the determination on the part of his people to remain an independent frontier. Thus the American and the Russian crises followed very different courses.

There is much in the career of Woodrow Wilson that recalls the tragic life-story of the Egyptian

Pharaoh, Amenophis IV, known to later ages as Akhnaton. Like the Egyptian king who strove to transform the religion of his people from a tribal polytheism into a pure and universal form of monotheism, Wilson strove to formulate finally the American creed as it affected the world. But the American creed is too loosely held, too vague a sentiment, to be formulated. A Californian, though he may belong to the same racial stock, cannot have the same outlook as a New Englander; a New Orleans Creole cannot share the attitude to life of a Scandinavian settler in Northern Michigan. America owes its continuance solely to the fact that all these diverse racial and geographical stocks assume that their pooled effort will make America sufficient to itself, and that "government of the people by the people for the people" will still persist in bestowing the fruits of middle-class prosperity. But it is obvious that this simple creed —or superstition—cannot be maintained if once any attempt is made to apply it to the more complex European situation. Once America backs any side in the European struggle, then that side has to become outwardly, if not inwardly, American; that is to say, it has to abandon all the traditional differences that distinguish it from its European neighbours. Wilson strove to reconcile the psychology of America with the remoter psychology of Eu-

rope, in the same way as Amenophis strove to identify all forms of Egyptian worship with his own personal and individual creed. In striving thus to simplify the situation, he merely complicated it. And the result was, as in the case of the Egyptian Pharaoh whom he resembled, a personal tragedy of immense magnitude, which left the American President an outlaw and heretic in his own country, and pursued him to his death with rancour and misunderstanding.

Russia in repudiating the war and the Romanovs had to repudiate Europe, and this despite the Bolsheviks themselves, whose dream was probably a Marxian version of Peter the Great's Empire. It became again a peasant country facing the East. America, by its repudiation of Wilson, was driven also to repudiate Europe, and this despite the most intelligent classes of Americans who were aware that the one hope of the maintenance of European peace lay in the establishment of an European concert of nations. America became again a land of opportunist industrialism, facing westward. Thus the two nations, having like two planets revolved in opposing orbits up to the moment these orbits coincided, resumed again their former course, but not without the hope of some further encounter in the future. The optimistic idealism of President Wilson, ready to accept the most outrageous provi-

sions of the Versailles Treaty for the sake of preserving his conception of a League of Nations bound to respect the fundamental principles of democracy, was finally rejected not by Europe, but by America. The fatalistic materialism of Lenin, ready to swallow complete defeat at Brest-Litovsk for the sake of creating a proletarian world-empire, broke equally before the lack of European support and the obstinacy of the Russian peasantry. With Wilson's final retirement and Lenin's new economic policy the issue of the great drama was largely settled as regards the two chief protagonists of Russia and America. But the third, Europe, caught in the cleft of the dilemma, unable to decide for either democratic capitalism or demagogic dictatorship, has as yet found no clear issue out of the impasse.

This position, which is the world position of to-day, was enforced on Europe by the successive abandonment of the European situation on the part of both Russia and America. In the case of Russia, the abandonment was perhaps more absolute, because it was more deeply psychological. The Russian asked Europe for a new fetich, a new sacred talisman, to replace the old fetich of the Orthodox Czar which was utterly worn out, and impotent to protect him longer against misfortune. Such a belief in the power of a fetich, a cult-object, is Oriental, and indeed the Russian is fundamentally

Oriental. The fetich of success had been imported formerly from abroad, by Peter the Great, by Catherine, by Alexander II, by Witte. Now it was no longer forthcoming. Even the guns and the gold that the Allies had promised and provided, were turning against the Russians themselves. A new talisman would have to be found within. Lenin was the sole man who could provide it. A workman's cap, a few words from Marx, education and electric light for all, would be sufficient. Russia could scramble out of her impasse, secure in the conviction that she henceforth could control her destiny alone, while undermining the nations of Europe with their own revolutionary ethic.

But America, too, abandoned Europe for causes that, however economic they may appear on the surface, have a firmly-grounded psychological foundation. Unlike Russia, all the talismans, wealth, power, prosperity, were in her hands. But she was uneasy because she could not discover a verbal formula that would cover equally her own political union and the diversity of disunited European nations. This belief in a formula—which expresses itself in Egyptian hieroglyph, in Aristotelian syllogism, in algebraic equation—is Occidental, and America is fundamentally Occidental. Even the arguments of the most enlightened European statesmen, prepared to back up President

Wilson in his demand for a League of Nations, turned against America itself. A League of Nations—what did that mean but a confederation of sovereign and independent states such as had threatened to disrupt the economic alliance between North and Middle West during the fateful years of 1854-65? What else did it mean, but that the Americans themselves, in so far as they were still sentimentally attached to Europe, could still feel themselves to be Europeans? The whole process of "Americanization" was threatened by such a programme. Common standards of Puritan conduct, of business dealing, of economic prosperity were threatened by such a step. Wilson's words, however close they seemed to Lincoln's, would effectively destroy all that the armies invoked by Lincoln had fought for. They would destroy Americanism, and make Europeans equal in every respect, to Americans. Let them be anathema! America hastened to scramble out of her impasse, fearful that the European nations were plotting against her, and determined henceforth to undermine them by means of the "peaceful penetration" of mass-production.

Nations have their phobias and complexes no less than individuals. In the case of America and Russia, a complex and a phobia were to take the place of the natural growth of tradition, and to strive to overcome the world.

Chapter XVII

FOR the past ten years the situation of Europe has been both grotesque and tragic. Had she made her exit from the stage of world-politics with the gesture of tragic dignity that marked the downfall of the ancient Roman Empire, had she been overwhelmed by a new wave of barbarians, the historian of to-day might have a more pleasant and profitable task to fulfill. But unfortunately nothing of this came to pass, nor did Europe really recover from the death-blow of the war. Since 1921, when the French armies marched into the Ruhr, she has become like a patient suffering from shell-shock who acts irresponsibly and has no coherent purpose in life. Apart from the tenuous hope of a League of Nations which has not been able to prevent fresh combinations of power, such as have been clearly revealed by the various naval pacts, nor fresh outbursts of rabid nationalism, such as France, Italy and various Balkan nationalities have displayed, Europe has done little, either morally or politically. Of the two new world-philosophies offered her, she has chosen neither.

The American world-philosophy, in the ultimate form that it has taken since the close of the war, is a rough-and-ready simplification of the far more complex but equally individualistic social philosophy of Washington, Jefferson and Lincoln. It exalts the physical liberty of the individual at the expense of his general social and moral responsibility. Immediately after the close of war, the labour situation in America became again acute. The great industrial trade unions, realising the immense part they had played in carrying the Allied effort to a successful conclusion, had long begun to agitate for an overthrow of the existing form of government and for such a seizure of power as had been effected in Russia. The American system of democratic capitalism, reverting into the hands of the great industrialists and their allies and servants, set itself to the task of destroying this opposition. Its two outstanding means were mass-production and coöperative capitalism. It set itself to the task of manufacturing more quickly and of giving the worker a share in the product. Thereby it created a new prosperity and a standardised happiness. Any protest became in the eyes of its leaders a crime against true Americanism. To enforce this unalterable Americanism upon the immense masses of citizens of foreign descent, it was necessary to stop the flow of immigration; and this was

promptly done. To prevent the country lapsing into a state of sheer moral anarchy, such as was foreshadowed by the post-war revivals of the Ku Klux Klan, the fierce recrudescence of race-hatreds cutting athwart all sections of American life, it was necessary to concentrate solely on a more intensive development of that industrial prosperity that had characterised the war years. The South was industrially invaded as well as the North, the East and the West became more firmly linked together by the great money and manufacturing interests. Finally, to ensure that the reëstablishment of the country was to be permanent, on the old basis of complete aloofness from both European radicalism and European idealism, it was necessary to stifle or suppress freedom of spirit, freedom of thought, freedom of public utterance, and to concentrate altogether on the immense material achievements that America had already accomplished—the improvement in living conditions, the provisions of schools, hospitals, roads, and scientific inventions for all sections of the population. Accordingly, the study of American patriotic views became an important part of school curriculums. Anyone who thought otherwise than these views taught, must either hold his peace or accept exile and poverty. During the years that immediately succeeded the war, a new body of American intellectuals again

took the road to Europe, not to mention those who were forcibly cast out upon Soviet Russia.

The Russian world-philosophy, as formulated by the leaders of the new Bolshevik régime, was also a comprehensive simplification of what was formerly a much more complex social position. It skilfully provided an outlet for public enterprise, while maintaining the power in the hands of a specially chosen and selected class. Unquestioningly the Bolsheviks accepted the postulate, which America had been foremost in proclaiming, that all power derives ultimately from the lowest ranks of the people, from the peasants and factory workers. This happened also to be the postulate of Karl Marx, and accordingly Marxism became a new State religion to take the place of the old, which had delegated this power of the people themselves into the hands of the Czar and of the Orthodox Church. But in its application to the situation created by the Russian débâcle, this dogma proved to be just as much of a check upon free activity as had all the old restrictions of the Czar. It exalted the moral and social responsibility of the individual at the expense of his physical liberty. Everyone, whether Communist or not, must henceforth behave in the way laid out for him by the heads of the Communist party, who though representing an even smaller proportion of the entire people than the American

Wall Street magnates, nevertheless had now all the power in their hands. The masses would be fed, housed, educated, on condition only that they did not undertake counter-revolutionary propaganda, and the Communist Secret Service was there to enforce this law, on penalty of death or imprisonment, against all who attempted to modify the existing political system. A new revolutionary army, recruited among the peasants, and backed by firm discipline, arose to take the place of the old; but the field of its activity was to be limited to helping the foreign proletariat to overthrow their own capitalist Imperialist governments, and to maintaining Lenin's system intact at home. All foreign influences, whether in the shape of very limited concessions to foreign capital, or works of art with a definitely anti-communist tendency, were to be severely supervised and ruthlessly suppressed. Thus freedom of activity outside the bounds of the Communist dogma became as impossible in Russia during the years after the war, as freedom of thought outside the bounds of the Capitalist assumption became in America. The underlying aim of the Russians became to create an army of young Lenins; that of the Americans to achieve a million Henry Fords.*

* See on this point, "The Diary of a Communist Schoolboy," by S. Ignatyev. Also "American Prosperity" by Paul M. Mazur.

It is quite obvious that none of the European nations could whole-heartedly accept either the American or the Russian solution. To follow the Russian idea out in all its logical implications meant the suppression of the Parliamentary régime to which Europe had been accustomed, and the transformation of all the European countries from constitutional monarchies to proletarian dictatorships, in which the will of a single man, or a small committee of men reinforced and balanced through the establishment of local advisory councils controlled all industrial production. To carry out in detail the American idea, it was necessary for Europe to abolish all gradations of rank and responsibility, such as a constitutional monarchy implies, and to concentrate entirely on demagogic parliamentarism, backed and controlled by the industrial interests which have everything to gain from an increase of individual production and prosperity. To follow out this ideal proved quite as impossible for Europe as to Russianise their existing populations. The traditional conservatism which dreads a complete break with the past, the already established forms of social, moral, and religious usage, and the lingering remnants of nationalist pride and sentiment, stood everywhere in the way. Only in one country, Italy, was the combination effected of proletarian demagogy and autocratic dictatorship. Thanks to

a chapter of accidents, Mussolini and his henchmen took over the rule of that country from the hands of the conservative Catholics and the anti-clerical Liberals alike. For the rest, the European countries tended to fall into the same alignment that had been theirs upon the first appearance of America and Russia upon the stage of the world. Western Europe, led by England and reconstructed Germany, tended to become more and more American and parliamentary; Eastern Europe, under the leadership of Italy, Hungary, Poland, tended to become more and more arbitrary and swayed by the dictates of revolutionary militarism.

2

The modern world, which we are examining from the perilously close range of participators in, rather than spectators of its effort, is essentially the fruit of two streams of influence, emanating from beyond the European frontier, and expressing themselves logically in the solutions of the social problem which America and Russia have found. These two streams of influence have been at work upon Europe, and in a different way upon the Far East, for at least two centuries past. At the present moment they are rapidly approaching their culmination. In order to understand this culmination

it is necessary to turn aside from the field of outward political action and to state, as far as such things can be finally stated, the fundamental psychological characteristics that go to the making up of what may be called the typical Russian and the typical American.

The Americans, taken as a class apart from Europeans or Asiatics, tend to have no interest whatever in thought for its own sake. Their special delight is not in thought, but in purely physical activity. This refusal to think maturely, to speculate even remotely about the ultimate problems of the world and of humanity, has frequently led European observers to characterise the American people as a young nation, a nation not grown up. But it was possibly quite as evident in the days of Washington as it is now; the only difference being that it has by now grown a dominating characteristic of all parts of the country, whereas in the early stages it was confined mostly to the frontier, and obscured from view by the influence of the better-educated colonial seaboard settlements, still under the spell of European ways of thinking. The whole course of American history may be summed up as the history of the spread of the pioneer and of his type of mind into every department of human effort. The pioneer type is always a man too busy with cutting away virgin forests, building roads,

cultivating land, opening mines and factories, inventing machines, making automobiles, gambling with stocks, devoting himself to social "service," to stop and ponder upon the æsthetic values of art and religion, or the metaphysical problems of human destiny. Such questions cannot enter into his pragmatic scheme of material effort directed towards immediate ends. For him the sheer delight of making suffices, not the value of the thing made. So habitual, so universal has this cult of activity for its own sake grown to the Americans, that it is constantly employed by all ranks of the people as a substitute for thought. The American uses leisure itself, not as a valuable opportunity for self-examination, but only as a stimulus to some new kind of activity. Sports and games, travel, book- and picture-collecting, education itself, become for him simply fresh pretexts for employing some more of his surplus energy, for taking part in some new form of mental distraction. For example, the European lecturers who annually go to America in such great numbers may be under the illusion that they are somehow guiding or directing the American mind into more fruitful channels; their American audiences are under no such illusion. Their aim is at the best merely to rapidly get first-hand information about some new fact that puzzles them; at the worst, to momentarily accept the lec-

turer's own views as a substitute for creative and independent thinking of their own, whereby they share the illusion that they are actually participating in some form of human thought-process.

Even when the American is in repose, he must somehow feel that his body, if not his mind, is exerting itself. The fundamental symbol of American life is not, as many observers have held, the skyscraper, with its busy activity, nor the athletic field with its gladiatorial baseball and football games, nor even that puritanic symbol of the pitcher of melting ice-water which makes its inevitable appearance equally upon the tables of the humblest lunch counters and the desks of bank presidents and statesmen. The true, the classic American symbol is the rocking-chair. It symbolises alike domestic comfort, and nomadic restlessness. In the rocking-chair one need not speak and yet one must continue to move to and fro. In the rocking-chair activity becomes a soothing narcotic, and absence of mental purpose a stimulus to further effort. The rocking-chair removes all the necessity for the contemplation of the great cosmos of justice and injustice, truth and falsehood, beauty and ugliness, to plant man firmly in the lesser cosmos of his personal individuality, his simple animal "reaction" to practical truth. In the rocking-chair one can "loaf and invite one's soul" for an endless journey. The goal

does not matter. This is true on every weekday, and on Sunday the activities of the rocking-chair are supplemented by the Sunday newspaper supplement, providing another substitute for thought.

On the other hand, the Russians, as opposed to the Americans, tend to have very little interest in physical activity. A fund of Mongolian inertia, concealed at the roots of the Russian character, probably accounts for this; but it is impossible to understand the tragic disorder of many Russian lives,* as well as the strange crisis of feverish and misdirected fury that traverse Russian history, unless we admit at the outset that the Russian is in some way prejudiced against activity for its own sake. If he undertakes activity at all, it must be for some object that lies beyond activity. Thus we find the Russian peasant becoming a tramp in order to "save his soul"; the Russian intellectual indulging in all forms of drunken debauchery in order to acquire the "experience that is necessary to an artist"; the Russian Czar making war on Oriental or European nations in order to prove that he is "by the Grace of God, leader of Eastern Orthodox Christianity." Nor has the Russian Revolution brought about any change in this state of affairs. Lenin himself, although he displayed while in power a quite remarkably un-Russian ability to

* For example, the life of Pushkin or of Dostoevsky.

make rapid decisions, owed his advent to power largely to his ability to hold his ground without altering his position. His own pedantic and doctrinaire Marxism shows, no less than his stoic fatalism, the fact that mere obstinate adherence to a theory was to him more important than practice, for many years before the moment that he suddenly found Russia at his feet. And Lenin owed, though perhaps he himself would never have admitted it, a great deal to the fiery Jew, Trotsky, who was profoundly un-Russian, indeed American, in temperament. The Revolution owed its success entirely to a few clean-cut practical actions thrown athwart a raging torrent of unpractical ideas and theories; Lenin and Trotsky rather saved Russia from herself, than created a new Russia. And since the Revolution the stream of endless discussion of theoretical ideas, has merely flowed on, like water under a bridge, leaving the structure of the state intact. A wise and witty French observer, Luc Durtain, who has seen Russia since the Revolution, has remarked that the Russian conversation is, in times of food shortage, in itself equal to meat and drink.

What, then, is the specific symbol of Russian life? It is not the immobile gleam of the ikon in the corner of the house, nor the strangely drifting, tentative and slow-gathering mass-demonstrations of the

people, nor the oddly mechanical governmentally-ordered demonstrations, nor the curiously vivid splashes of gay and exotic colour that contrast with the sombreness of the landscape. The specific symbol of Russia is probably the samovar. Ready at all times of the day and night to provide hot water, it stimulates but does not nourish, like the endless Russian conversations. It is the essential element of every Russian social gathering, and yet at the same time is only a pretext for meeting and wasting one's energy in talk: as much a pretext as Moscow, Russia itself, life, or the Universe in Russian eyes. It does not provide tea in itself. For that a teapot is still necessary. It only provides the hot water that may be used or not to produce tea, as you will. In short, it is as perfect a symbol of inactive power as anyone is ever likely to find. And, like Russia herself, it has fire in its belly: fire hidden away from too prying eyes, under an outward shell of servility and conformity.

3

The conflict that is being fought out to-day between America and Russia is a psychological one. It is a subjective conflict between two opposed conceptions of the destiny of mankind, rather than an objective conflict between armies and directly

political aims. And the two fields of its activity are the European and the Asiatic world.

Both Russia and America have achieved within their borders what to them is the perfect mode of existence. They have arrived at the Utopian state of complete optimism and confidence for the future. Despite the activities of one set of European prophets, the Soviet system has not broken down. It is more secure, after ten years, than the system of Czardom that it replaced. Despite the activities of another set of prophets, American democratic capitalism has not broken down either. It apparently possesses inexhaustible reserves of prosperity and energy. But Europe, scarcely recovered from the horrors of its own internecine struggle, cannot follow the course of either country. Europe is like the ancient Hebrew monarchy divided between the imperialist tolerance of the kings of Israel and the narrow particularism of the kings of Judah. To the working classes the Russian solution, in its trenchant logic, immediately appeals; but this drives the capitalist classes only further towards embracing the ideas of America. To the intellectuals, the American solution is a monstrous vulgarisation; but this only means that they must either become reactionary, or accept the revolutionary message of Russia. Europe, caught between the intellectual and moral millstones of two great

powers which were originally of its own creation, but which have gone their own ways without accepting the nineteenth century compromises, is awaiting a new political Messiah with a clear message; hence the popularity of such a figure as Mussolini. But whether Europe, in its decadent cosmopolitanism, will ever achieve anything resembling the unity of which its poets only dreamed, is doubtful. It is far more likely to pass, by gradual infiltration of influence and direction, completely under the sway of the United States.

But it is not only in Europe that the world-struggle is being waged. The balance of power, ultimately, lies in the Far East, and its enormous reserves of natural resources and of population. And during the past ten years the Far East has shown clearly the direction it proposes to follow. It is ready to accept the material achievements of the West, without in the slightest degree altering its own racial and social traditions. Thus it is ready to turn the weapons of the West against the West itself, while remaining at heart far more akin to the spirit of non-individualistic fatalism which has successfully guided Russia. The most outstanding example of this recent development in the East is Japan, which in the words of a modern Russian writer, "wishes to take her machinery from America, her spiritual culture from Russia." China

and India are likely sooner or later to take the same path, thanks to the awakening of Asiatic racial pride, actively fomented by Europe's glaring administrative blunders and internal political divisions.

4

The parallel lines that we have drawn between the two great frontier nations are now complete, and the whole world finds itself in the dilemma of having to make either a choice or a compromise between the ideals of America and of Russia. At the present moment, the tendency is probably towards a compromise of some sort, the war years and post-war years having too profoundly shaken mankind. But this tendency is only temporary, and is due to the slow disappearance of the generation that lived through the crisis of the war, a generation that emerged from the conflict profoundly sceptical of itself and of others, and incapable of the supreme unreason of an absolute creed.

If Russia succeeds in consolidating its moral gains in the Far East, while America no less succeeds in its clever policy of economic penetration into Europe—a policy to which European newspapers, theatres, hotels, shops and social usages are gradually but unmistakably responding—if these two achievements come about, another world-con-

flict is almost certain to take place before the close of the twentieth century. For between an industrialised and proletarian East and an industrialised and plutocratic West, the population problem will rapidly become as acute as it already is in Japan. Nor will the sporadic and necessarily individualistic propaganda of birth control mend matters here. Under the present conditions controlling this propaganda, the better, finer and more harmonious sections of the population simply tend to die out, while the lower, baser, and least intelligent, go on increasing—thus destroying the aim of eugenics and inverting the true course of human evolution. This inversion of evolution is now powerfully aided by the mushroom-like growth of industrial capitalism, ready to exploit the lower levels for its own purposes, and also by all so-called "religious" propaganda, which has unfortunately always an equally "practical" end in view, whether directed by the ideals of Communist Bolshevism, Catholic Ecclesiasticism, or American Rotarianism. Thus the only hope for avoidance of a conflict between the two forces loosed on the world by Russia and America, becomes some shadowy proposal for complete disarmament, or the limitation of competitive industrialism and the breeding of a new aristocratic élite to control the economic and social life of the various nations. Such a proposal lies apparently outside

the sphere of "practical" politics, and only the idealist philosopher Plato has dealt fully with its implications.

The fact that most intelligent Europeans have come to despair of the prospect, and have practically abandoned any further attempt to control the two opposing forces let loose upon the world, is shown by the extraordinary revival, within recent years, of intellectual interest in the eighteenth century. Such people realise that the nineteenth century, with its compromise between materialism and idealism, failed to liberate humanity, so they yearn to go back to a happier, more harmonious time, before instinct and reason conflicted, when neither Russia nor America interfered with the course of human existence. This movement towards the eighteenth century is however merely a final gesture of world-weary romanticism, impotent to create any new values for humanity. It cannot postpone by a single day the conflict that is increasingly approaching between the unloosed forces of America and Russia.

The only factors that may prevent that conflict from taking on an acute phase in the not distant future, exist not in hyper-intellectual and creatively sterile Europe, but in Russia and in America themselves. Russia's attempt to get the East completely on her side by stirring up the Asiatics against the

Caucasians may perhaps prove abortive, for the reason that the heads of the Communist party take at the same time no pains to conceal their immense contempt for all forms of transcendent and organised religion save their own. This side of Bolshevik propaganda may possibly fail to appeal very strongly to the other-worldly millions of the Orient. At the same time, America's effort to control Europe through intensive financial and economic penetration may possibly fail because of the inferior intellectual character of the envoys she sends to Europe, or because Europe may still place a higher value on leisure, culture, and beauty, than upon any of the energy-wasting devices America has to offer her. But apart from this, there seems very little doubt that America and Russia are destined to bulk more and more largely in the world's affairs, until the inevitable clash between them takes place. Europe has no longer the economic force nor the creative will to resist America. Asia has no longer the spiritual fervour nor the unified faith to hold back Russia.

If such a conflict as we have envisaged should take place, what would be the result? The crisis of the European war would simply be repeated on a larger scale. Russia, together with her Eastern allies, would possess incalculable reserves of manpower; and the fact that the Soviet Republic has

shown a determination to maintain in existence a highly-efficient and disciplined army of considerable numbers, would give her an initial advantage, in case the first attack in the opening stages of the contest came from her side. But America and her European allies would undoubtedly possess a preponderance of machinery, greater financial resources, and a far superior naval and aerial force. After the first year of battle, their effort would only increase, while Russia's effort would almost necessarily diminish. Russia's only hope would be in a short rather than in a long war.

On the other hand, even should the Western Allies hold the coasts of Russia, together with the Far East, in a complete blockade, a Russo-Mongolian combination could continue the struggle almost indefinitely. The immense reserves of food, land, and man-power at the disposal of the Soviet war lords would insure this. Russia cannot be completely beaten by a blockade (even when that is aided by internal famine) as the Allies found out in 1919. Nor can she be beaten by land-invasion, as Napoleon found out in 1812. The only hope for the West of obtaining a decision in their favour would be to invade and terrorise Russia through the air. Such a campaign, if the West had sufficient preponderance in the air to carry it to a successful conclusion, might eventually lead to an admission

of physical defeat on Russia's part. But hers would nevertheless remain a moral victory of enormous importance to the future of the human race.

The dangers of a war of this nature, especially if the forces engaged are anywhere near equal, can scarcely be overstated. The recent European war gave those who took part in it a faint foretaste of them. There would be continuous bombing of enemy capitals, communications, granaries, food and munition depots. Armies would operate at enormous distances from their base of supplies, with resultant tension and spirit of mutiny ready to flame up every moment. Ocean-going submarines would defy the blockade, and spread death and destruction on the high seas. Governments might have to meet and be conducted from secret places underground in order to escape destruction from poison-gas and other lethal weapons. Spying and counter-spying would be universal. Such a state of affairs might well lead the world rapidly back to a state of sheer anarchy, and undo in a few years the finest effort of five thousand years of civilisation. The break-up of the Roman Empire, or the recent chaos in China, offers but a feeble picture of what such a world would be like. The end of such a conflict might well be such a state of famine, disorder and exhaustion as to leave no hope to mankind for the future.

Under these circumstances, the duty of every intelligent Russian and every intelligent American of to-day becomes clear. Since salvation is not to be looked for either from the old civilisations of the East nor from the more recent European civilisations; since both are now rapidly and inevitably in decay after their last great creative period (which was the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, rather than the eighteenth or nineteenth) ; since, above all, no revival of unified religious faith is to be looked for either among the Western Christian sects, or the great Oriental religions, we must either find some hope of salvation in ourselves, or admit our defeat, and with it the ultimate defeat of mankind. Step by step, inch by inch, we must oppose the tides of Bolshevism and of Americanism that are now sweeping over the world. We must save America and Russia from themselves. That is our mission and our purpose. But how can we fulfil this mission that our time—perhaps the most tragic time in all human history—imposes upon us? We can not fulfil it separately, for that is a task beyond the powers of any single man, or body of men. We must strive to inform both America and Russia with a purpose alien to their whole historical development. Against these two attempts to impose on mankind a purely mechanical and material conformity, we must uphold, perhaps for the last time,

the values of an ideal and supra-physical unity of spirit, not of function, of a humanism that is at once scientific and æsthetic, and of a world outlook that reconciles both man's desire to achieve "the good life" for himself on this planet, and his overwhelming sense of awe and wonder at the superhuman processes of the universe. Perhaps this task is altogether beyond our feeble and intermittent powers. Yet it is the one remaining task left to humanity to accomplish in our age. And after all, it is a problem that only education can solve, and we must leave it to the teachers to accomplish. It is Russia, not America, that needs an Emerson to lead it towards individual self-reliance. It is America, not Russia that needs a Dostoevsky to show it the value of common submission to the mysterious powers that govern the development of all spirituality.

April 1927-
August 1929.

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